City and County of San Francisco

Office of the Controller – City Services Auditor

SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY:

Absence Management Efforts Can Be Enhanced Through Improved Organizational Culture and More Effective Program Management Tools

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CITY SERVICES AUDITOR

The City Services Auditor Division (CSA) was created in the Office of the Controller through an amendment to the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco (City) that was approved by voters in November 2003. Charter Appendix F grants CSA broad authority to:

- Report on the level and effectiveness of San Francisco's public services and benchmark the City to other public agencies and jurisdictions.
- Conduct financial and performance audits of city departments, contractors, and functions to assess efficiency and effectiveness of processes and services.
- Operate a whistleblower hotline and website and investigate reports of waste, fraud, and abuse of city resources.
- Ensure the financial integrity and improve the overall performance and efficiency of city government.

CSA may conduct financial audits, attestation engagements, and performance audits. Financial audits address the financial integrity of both city departments and contractors and provide reasonable assurance about whether financial statements are presented fairly in all material aspects in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Attestation engagements examine, review, or perform procedures on a broad range of subjects such as internal controls; compliance with requirements of specified laws, regulations, rules, contracts, or grants; and the reliability of performance measures. Performance audits focus primarily on assessment of city services and processes, providing recommendations to improve department operations.

CSA conducts audits in accordance with the Government Auditing Standards published by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. These standards require:

- Independence of audit staff and the audit organization.
- Objectivity of the auditors performing the work.
- Competent staff, including continuing professional education.
- Quality control procedures to provide reasonable assurance of compliance with the auditing standards.

For questions regarding the report, please contact Director of City Audits Tonia Lediju at Tonia.Lediju@sfgov.org or 415-554-5393 or CSA at 415-554-7469.

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City and County of San Francisco

Office of the Controller - City Services Auditor

SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY: Absence Management Efforts Can Be Enhanced Through Improved Organizational Culture and More Effective Program Management Tools

December 22, 2016

Why We Conducted the Audit

The management of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) recognizes the impact of absenteeism on its operations. Of the ten departments of the City and County of San Francisco (City) with the largest operating budgets, SFMTA had the second-highest absenteeism rate, expending approximately $42 million in leave pay to its employees in fiscal year 2013-14.

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

An effective absence management program minimizes the negative impacts of absences, including increased costs associated with unscheduled absences, increased pressure on employees to cover for absent coworkers, increased administration time to cover for absent employees, and services not being delivered. Absence management encompasses aspects of human capital and technical elements.

What We Found

The Majority of SFMTA Focus Groups Expressed That Three Elements of Organizational Culture Need Improvement to Enhance Employee Engagement and Improve Attendance

RESPECT

Respectful treatment of all employees and respect for their ideas are leading contributors to job satisfaction and a sense of belonging at work.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication requires management to engage employees by soliciting participation and feedback.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Increased accountability and commitment can be achieved through compassionate leadership and effective communication.

**Percentage of SFMTA employee focus groups expressing the need for professional respect and compassionate leadership, better communication, and increased accountability.*

High Levels of Employee Engagement Are Driven by Six Elements of Organizational Culture

Constructive Performance Conversations

Career Development & Training

Work-Life Balance

Inclusive Work Environment

Employee Involvement

Communication from Management

The audit found that SFMTA needs to improve its overall organizational culture, including enhancing professional respect, communication, and accountability, to enhance employee engagement and attendance.

SFMTA would benefit from having management consistently demonstrate elements of compassionate leadership that are integral to SFMTA's core values and leadership commitments. According to a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, federal agencies with the highest employee engagement levels had staff that used an average of three fewer sick days per year and experienced 50 percent fewer equal employment opportunity complaints compared to agencies with the lowest engagement levels.

The audit also found that:

- SFMTA's policies and procedures for absence management are inadequate, including those related to managing and monitoring long-term absences and the return to work process.
- SFMTA lacks the oversight and systems to efficiently track and monitor employee absences, including leaves under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and other long-term leaves.

What We Did

The audit assessed the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and oversight of absence management at SFMTA and determined strategies for SFMTA to measure, mitigate, and manage employee absences, including determining leading practices for absence management. The audit included 12 focus groups with employees across SFMTA. These employees also responded to a survey on their perspectives and experiences related to absence management. The audit team reviewed applicable laws and regulations, surveyed other jurisdictions, analyzed payroll and leave data, conducted file reviews, and assessed SFMTA's leave management processes.

What We Recommend

The report includes 27 recommendations for SFMTA to improve its organizational culture and internal controls related to absence management. These include that SFMTA should:

- Establish a managerial training policy that is consistent with developing core competencies in leadership skills and that will provide tools to foster a respectful, collaborative, and accountable organizational culture. At a minimum, collaborate with the Department of Human Resources to develop and implement a sustainable and consistent leadership development program.
- Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that considers multiple avenues to connect with employees, including in-person and online, and that allows for two-way communication.
- Seek external expertise or hire an employee dedicated to assessing, enhancing, and further implementing the agency's workforce engagement strategy. This should include regularly tracking and analyzing data on employee absences, engagement, job satisfaction, and workforce demographics to identify and report on patterns and make data-driven decisions.
- Strengthen and formalize the employee recognition and reward program throughout the agency to acknowledge and recognize employee achievements and accomplishments.
- Ensure that the agency provides a work environment that promotes employee health, work-life balance, and employee productivity.
- Establish an absence management policy for the agency.
- Work with the Office of the Controller's eMerge Division to implement the PeopleSoft Absence Management system module.
- Use data-driven staffing analyses to inform its decisions for budgeting positions throughout the agency.

Copies of the full report may be obtained at:
Office of the Controller • City Hall, Room 316 • 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place • San Francisco, CA 94102 • 415.554.7500
or on the Internet at http://www.sfgov.org/controller

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

Ben Rosenfield
Controller

Todd Rydstrom
Deputy Controller

December 22, 2016

Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Mr. Edward D. Reiskin
Director of Transportation
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Board Chairman, Board Members, and Mr. Reiskin:

The Office of the Controller's City Services Auditor Division (CSA) presents its audit report of employee absence management at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). The audit, conducted at the request of SFMTA management, had as its objectives to:

- Assess the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and oversight of absence management at SFMTA.
- Determine absenteeism's impacts on departmental resources and operations.
- Determine strategies for SFMTA to measure, mitigate, and manage employee absences, including determining leading practices for absence management.

The audit found that SFMTA needs to improve its overall organizational culture, which should increase employee engagement and allow for better management of employee absenteeism. Through CSA's focus groups, which included 116 employees covering 26 job classifications across the agency, and through 132 focus group surveys administered, the audit found that employees feel a lack of respect and collaborative communication and that the perceived lack of respect and communication decreases accountability and commitment to the organization.

The audit also found that SFMTA's policies and procedures for absence management are inadequate and that SFMTA has no centralized process to manage and monitor long-term absences. Also, SFMTA lacks the oversight and systems to efficiently track and monitor employee absences. Last, SFMTA only performs staffing analyses for transit operators and parking control officers, and these analyses are inadequate, resulting in inaccurate predictions that may hinder the department from efficiently and effectively meeting its goals and service needs.

The report includes 27 recommendations for SFMTA to improve its organizational culture and internal controls related to absence management. SFMTA's response to the report is attached as Appendix D. CSA will work with SFMTA to follow up on the status of the recommendations made in this report.

CSA appreciates the assistance and cooperation of SFMTA staff during the audit. For questions about the report, please contact me at Tonia.Lediju@sfgov.org or 415-554-5393 or CSA at 415-554-7469.

Respectfully,

Tonia Lediju
Director of City Audits

cc: Board of Supervisors
Budget Analyst
Citizens Audit Review Board
City Attorney
Civil Grand Jury
Mayor
Public Library

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADA	Federal Americans with Disabilities Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
City	City and County of San Francisco
Controller	Office of the Controller
COSO	Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission
CPCS	Capital Projects Controls Systems, a project management, accounting, and timekeeping system used by SFMTA's Capital Programs & Construction Division
CSA	City Services Auditor Division of the Office of the Controller
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
EAR	Employee Attendance Resources webpage on SFMTA's intranet, established by the Absence Management Task Force
FMLA	Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993
FTC	Federal Trade Commission
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
HRDB	Human Resource Database System, a database used by SFMTA to track data for several human resources functions
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
Muni	San Francisco Municipal Railway
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NYMTA	The Metropolitan Transportation Authority of the State of New York
OGC	Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Department of Education
PeopleSoft	The City's payroll system, maintained by the eMerge Division of the Office of the Controller
RTW	Return to Work unit
RTWP	Return to work process
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
SFMTA	San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
Task force	Absence Management Task Force

TimeLink	Electronic time punch card system that transmits employee work hours to PeopleSoft.
Trapeze	System used for scheduling, dispatching, and timekeeping for the transit operator classification
Patent Office	U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
VTT	Verification of Transit Training, within the Training & Instruction unit of SFMTA

INTRODUCTION

Audit Authority

This audit was conducted under the authority of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco (City), Section 3.105 and Appendix F, which requires that the City Services Auditor (CSA) of the Office of the Controller (Controller) conduct periodic, comprehensive financial and performance audits of city departments, services, and activities.

This is CSA's fifth annual performance audit of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). The audit assessed the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and oversight related to employee absence management.

Overview of Absence Management

What is absence management and why is it critical?

Absence management programs are designed to control employee absences that result from illness or injury and, more specifically, to control unexplained, unscheduled, or excessive absenteeism. These programs should provide a systematic framework for measuring, administering, and managing employee absences.

Absence management is an essential function in any organization. An effective, centralized absence management function minimizes the negative impacts of absences, including increased costs associated with unscheduled absences, increased pressure on colleagues and administration time to cover for absent employees, and services not being delivered.

Background

In 1999 San Francisco voters amended the City Charter by passing Proposition E, which called for the creation of SFMTA through the consolidation of the San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) and the City's Department of Parking and Traffic. The new agency began on July 1, 2002. In 2007 voters approved Proposition A, which granted SFMTA regulatory authority over the taxi industry, effective March 1, 2009.

SFMTA is responsible for operating and maintaining the City's network of surface transportation, which includes pedestrians, bicycles, transit, traffic, and parking. SFMTA also regulates the taxi industry in San Francisco.

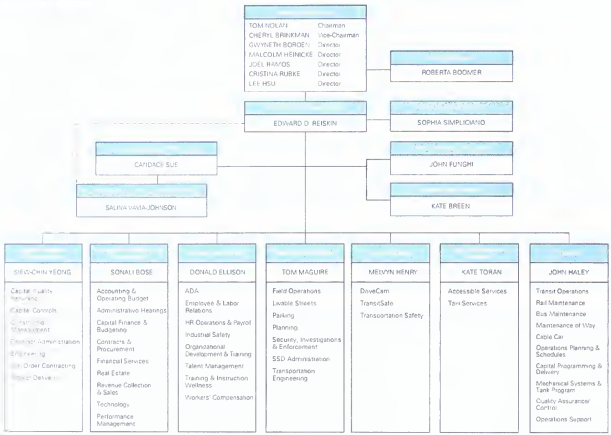
Governance of SFMTA

A seven-member Board of Directors, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the Board of Supervisors, governs SFMTA. The Board of Directors sets policy for SFMTA, approves its budget, and appoints its director of transportation (director), who leads SFMTA's ten divisions.

SFMTA's Organization

Exhibit 1 shows how SFMTA is organized.

EXHIBIT 1 SFMTA Organizational Chart as of January 2016



Source: SFMTA

The director's mission is to ensure that each division works effectively to serve SFMTA's community by providing high-quality, responsive, and reliable public transportation for San Francisco and the Bay Area.

SFMTA's Budget

SFMTA's operating budget for fiscal year 2014-15 was $946 million, which provided for 5,056 full-time equivalent positions. SFMTA's employees are represented by labor organizations under the terms of 17 memorandums of understanding (MOUs). Some of these MOUs cover only

employees who work in service-critical job classifications used by SFMTA, while other MOUs are citywide. In all, SFMTA employees work in 219 job classifications.

Exhibit 2 shows, by division, SFMTA's budget and number of authorized positions in fiscal years 2013-14 and 2014-15.

EXHIBIT 2 SFMTA's Operating Budget and Positions[a] by Division

Division	2013-14 Amended Budget		2014-15 Adopted Budget	
	Amount	Positions	Amount	Positions
Agency-wide[b]	$90,289,473	-	$112,349,958	49
Board of Directors	725,627	6	591,346	4
Capital Programs & Construction[c]	-	169	500,000	156
Communications	3,926,126	18	5,273,057	23
Executive Director	1,192,197	4	2,448,972	7
Finance & Information Technology	77,008,396	335	82,086,917	358
Government Affairs	671,304	3	1,032,451	4
Human Resources	24,962,039	135	29,618,250	174
System Safety	4,345,595	22	3,054,967	13
Sustainable Streets	141,976,668	777	153,672,773	687
Transit	481,382,508	3,358	528,108,673	3,554
Taxi & Accessible Services	24,580,614	25	26,758,687	27
Total	**$851,060,547**	**4,852**	**$945,496,051**	**5,056**

Notes:
[a] Position counts are rounded.
[b] Agency-wide includes SFMTA's commitments to other transit agencies, costs that affect the entire organization, and estimated costs that are unknown at budget submission but anticipated to occur during the fiscal year.
[c] Budget amounts do not include capital budget, which are funded through non-local funds per SFMTA.

Source: SFMTA

SFMTA's Absence Management Task Force

Shortly after the audit began, SFMTA launched an Absence Management Task Force to bring together various stakeholders in the department to assess its absence management processes and develop solutions to address areas of concern.

SFMTA's absenteeism rate is second among the top ten City departments in terms of budget.

Of the ten city departments with the largest operating budgets in fiscal year 2013-14, SFMTA ranked second in leave pay, leave hours, and absenteeism rate. Absenteeism rate is defined as total leave hours (scheduled and unscheduled) as a percentage of the total potential working hours available.

City employees earn various forms of leave, including legal holidays (11 days per year for full-time employees), vacation (10-20 days), floating holidays (4-5 days), and sick leave (13 days). Employees who use their annual paid leave would be absent approximately 18 percent of the time.

Exhibit 3 shows the absenteeism rates of the departments with the largest budgets.

EXHIBIT 3 SFMTA's Absenteeism Rate Was the Second Highest of the Ten Largest City Departments in Fiscal Year 2013-14

Department	Number of Employees	Absenteeism Rate*	Leave Hours	Leave Pay
Fire	1,616	13.99%	470,365	$23,200,154
SFMTA	**5,571**	**12.92%**	**1,497,299**	**41,793,144**
Sheriff	1,081	12.87%	289,350	12,414,565
Public Utilities Commission	2,845	11.07%	655,176	26,475,669
Police	3,267	10.71%	727,731	39,353,431
Airport	2,036	10.49%	444,302	15,360,928
General Services Agency – Administrative Services	1,041	8.81%	190,750	6,829,023
Public Health	8,960	8.74%	1,629,676	65,345,889
Human Services Agency	3,120	8.46%	549,220	18,192,506
Recreation and Park	2,390	4.63%	230,278	6,558,790
Total	**31,927**		**6,684,147**	**$255,524,099**

*Note: Calculated based on the assumption that all employees are scheduled to work 40 hours per week.

Source: Auditor's analysis of data from the City's payroll and accounting systems.

Absenteeism rates of 11 to 17 percent exist for SFMTA's top five classifications in terms of leave pay.

The five job classifications with the highest leave pay at SFMTA have absenteeism rates ranging from 10.9 to 16.5 percent. Of these five classifications, one is a supervisor classification. Transit operators have the second-highest absenteeism rate, following parking control officers.

Exhibit 4 shows the absenteeism rates of the five job classifications at SFMTA with the most leave pay.

EXHIBIT 4 Parking Control Officers and Transit Operators Had the Highest Absenteeism Rates at SFMTA in Fiscal Year 2013-14

Job Classification	Number of Employees	Absenteeism Rate*	Leave Hours	Leave Pay
Parking Control Officer	297	16.49%	101,880	$1,978,006
Transit Operator	2,296	14.31%	683,437	14,394,310
Electronic Maintenance Technician	114	13.22%	31,352	1,476,400
Electrical Transit System Mechanic	233	12.72%	61,661	2,134,274
Transit Supervisor	234	10.92%	53,127	2,029,503
All Other Classifications	2,393	11.34%	565,842	19,780,651
Total	**5,567**		**1,497,299**	**$41,793,144**
SFMTA Absenteeism Rate		**12.92%**		

*Note: Calculated based on the assumption that all employees are scheduled to work 40 hours per week.

Source: Auditor's analysis of data from the City's payroll system.

SFMTA's absenteeism rate by division

SFMTA's divisions have absenteeism rates ranging from 1.7 to 14.3 percent. The Transit Division, which is SFMTA's largest in terms of staff, has the highest absenteeism rate at 14.3 percent. Exhibit 5 presents the absenteeism rate of each division and SFMTA as a whole.

EXHIBIT 5 Absenteeism Varied Greatly Across SFMTA's Divisions in Fiscal Year 2013-14

Division[a]	Number of Employees	Absenteeism Rate[b]	Leave Hours	Leave Pay
Transit	3,695	14.26%	1,095,970	$28,560,009
System Safety	15	12.78%	3,987	171,243
Capital Programs & Construction	126	11.69%	30,635	1,668,737
Finance & Information Technology	380	11.42%	90,246	3,515,138
Sustainable Streets	1,013	10.91%	229,852	6,036,389
Human Resources	182	8.86%	33,525	1,285,344
Taxi & Accessible Services	29	8.50%	5,130	185,795
Government Affairs	3	8.28%	517	33,037
Executive Director	4	7.10%	591	41,687
Communications	27	5.15%	2,890	133,972
Board of Directors	9	5.02%	940	50,228
Administration	84	1.73%	3,016	$111,565
Total	**5,567**		**1,497,299**	**$41,793,144**
SFMTA Absenteeism Rate		**12.92%**		

Notes:
[a] The Administration Division is not one of the ten divisions of SFMTA but is included based on payroll data.
[b] Calculated based on the assumption that all employees are scheduled to work 40 hours per week.

Source: Auditor's analysis of data from the City's payroll system.

Elements of Absence Management

Absence management encompasses aspects of human capital and technical elements. Exhibit 6 shows some of these elements.

EXHIBIT 6 **Technical and Human Capital Aspects Are Essential to an Effective Absence Management Program**

Source: Based on auditor's analysis of employee engagement and absence management literature.

SFMTA's strategic plan and leadership commitments reflect the goals for its culture.

Culture has important influences on the development and change of organizational strategy and binds an organization's strategy to outcomes.[1] Culture is what provides agency members a common ground for interpreting events and understanding issues and expectations. SFMTA's director conveys his vision for the organization through multiple avenues, including the organization's strategic plan, mission statement, and leadership commitments, all of which are in writing. The multiyear strategic plan sets the direction for the agency, forms the basis for its two-year capital and operating budgets, and defines its core values. As part of its strategic plan for fiscal years 2012-13 through 2017-18, SFMTA describes its organizational core values as follows:

- Leadership: Realizing and implementing the vision to the fullest
- Teamwork: Working together in partnership to provide excellent customer service
- Integrity: Working with the highest standards of honesty and ethics

[1] Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors, *Culture and the Role of Internal Audit: Looking Below the Surface*, June 2014.

- Accountability: Taking joint responsibility to set and meet or exceed the agency's goals
- Effectiveness: Achieving results through collaboration and efficient use of resources
- Respect: Holding those with and for whom we work in high esteem and regard

SFMTA's goal is to create together a workplace that collaborates, innovates, and encourages communication and accountability to deliver outstanding service.

SFMTA's mission is to "work together to plan, build, operate, regulate, and maintain the transportation network, with [its] partners, to connect communities." To accomplish this mission—and acknowledging that its workforce is one of the agency's major assets—one of SFMTA's goals is to create a workplace that delivers outstanding service by improving internal communications, creating a collaborative and innovative work environment, improving employee accountability, and improving relationships and partnerships with stakeholders.

Consistent with the organization's core values, mission, and goals, SFMTA's leadership team has made a list of commitments, as summarized in Exhibit 7.

EXHIBIT 7 The Ten Leadership Commitments of SFMTA Reflect the Culture It Wants to Achieve

Leadership Commitment
1. I actively create a workplace that embraces and promotes respect, accountability, and collaboration.
2. I am respectful and responsive and honor my commitments to others.
3. I choose not to assign blame, and I encourage my colleagues to transition from a culture of blame to a culture of accountability.
4. I assume my colleagues are operating from a standpoint of positive intent and commitment to the success of the SFMTA.
5. I choose to practice accountability. I am 100 percent accountable for myself and my actions. If I have an issue with a colleague, I take it directly to the person in order to resolve it promptly and constructively.
6. I am constructive and open when giving and receiving feedback.
7. I use my words consciously, constructively, and positively. I am accountable for the impact that my words have on others.
8. I operate from the context of togetherness and teamwork, and I am honest and authentic in my interactions.
9. I am inclusive of colleagues who want or need to be kept informed about agency issues.
10. When I am not available, I ensure those who I delegate to act in my place fully understand their role and are granted the authority to represent my views at meetings.

Source: SFMTA

Laws and Regulations Related to Absences.

City, state, and federal laws and regulations address employee leaves. The San Francisco Administrative Code, Chapter 12W, also known as the Sick Leave Ordinance, requires employers to provide sick leave to all city employees. Also, leaves of absence for city employees are subject to Rule 420 of the City's Civil Service Commission. Rule 420 applies to all service-critical classes at SFMTA and addresses the various types of allowed leave.

At the state level, the California Government Code, Section 12940-12951, discusses employee leave as it pertains to unlawful practices and discrimination by employers in the state.

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) allows eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave or to substitute appropriate paid leave if the employee has earned or accrued it, for up to 12 work weeks in any 12 months, for specified family and medical reasons. Under some circumstances, employees may take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis. That means an employee may take leave in separate blocks of time or by reducing the time the employee works each day or week for a single qualifying reason.

SFMTA has policies, procedures, and systems for managing absences.

The overall management of employee leave at SFMTA is shared among various stakeholders performing different functions, both within the Human Resources Division and at each individual work unit. Exhibit 8 shows all the stakeholders involved.

EXHIBIT 8 **SFMTA's Leave Management Process Is Handled by Both Human Resources and Operational Unit Staff**

*Note: ADA is the Equal Employment Opportunity unit in SFMTA's Human Resources Division.

Source: Auditor's analysis based on observations of process

At the work-unit level, stakeholders include the following:

- Employee: Responsible for submitting sufficient and timely documentation to support leave requested.
- Supervisor: Responsible for reviewing employee leave requests for completion, eligibility, and for tracking purposes.
- Human Resources Liaison: Serves as the liaison between the division and Human Resources, specifically for large divisions with many employees.

Exhibit 9 briefly describes the functions of the units of SFMTA's Human Resources Division as they relate to leave management.

EXHIBIT 9 Leave Management Functions of SFMTA's Human Resources Division

Human Resources Division Unit	Leave Management Function
Employee & Labor Relations	• Guides supervisors and managers on proper interpretation of collective bargaining agreements and memorandums of understanding. • Participates in investigations, advises regarding disciplinary actions, and administers the grievance process.
ADA	• Implements the reasonable accommodation process, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, including for employees returning to work who cannot perform the essential functions of their positions.
Human Resources Operations: Return to Work Unit	• Reviews, analyzes, and processes employees' requests for long-term leave and intermittent FMLA and administers the process for employees returning to work from leave. • Responds to questions and concerns at the Return to Work window, via e-mail, and by telephone.
Training & Instruction	• Ensures that all transit operators complete their training requirements upon return from long-term leave, if required. Trainings include: – Requalification training: Refresher course for rail vehicle operators with long-term leave of 60 days or longer and for rubber tire vehicle operators with long-term leave of 120 days or longer – Verification of Transit Training: 35 hours of training (15 classroom and 20 behind-the-wheel) for long-term leave of two years
Wellness (includes License & Medical Unit)	• Ensures that employees are medically cleared to work and comply with the U.S. Department of Transportation mandated drug and alcohol regulations. • Ensures that employees possess valid required documents upon return from long-term leave, including: – Unexpired California driver license of the appropriate class (A, B, or C) that is clear of restrictions and suspensions – Unexpired medical examiner's certificate card (from Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center) – Unexpired Verification of Transit Training card
Workers' Compensation	• Oversees and manages workers' compensation claims administration provided by a contracted third-party administrator. • Oversees the transitional work program for returning injured employees to ensure that they return to work at a modified capacity within their physical limitations.

Source: SFMTA

Human Resource Database System

SFMTA instituted the Human Resource Database System (HRDB) to track data for several human resources functions, such as employee personnel information, position control, long-term leave requests, and license and medical credentials.

The Return to Work Unit

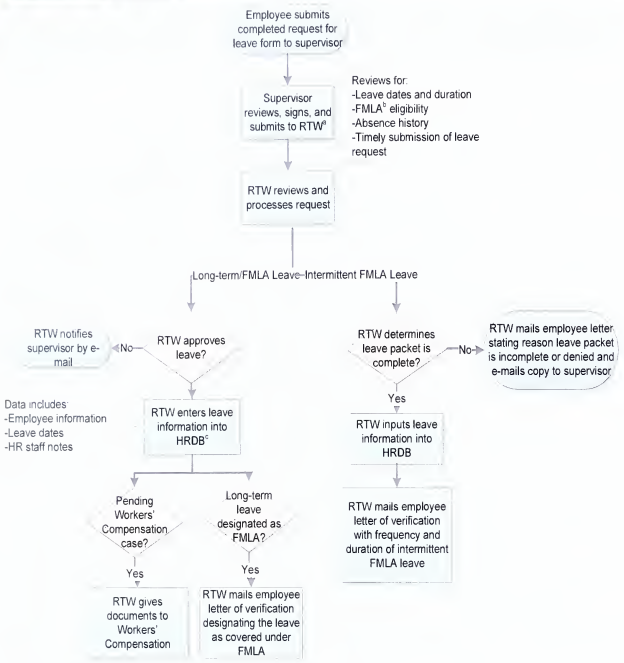
The Return to Work unit in the Human Resources Division, staffed by four employees and one manager, administers the request and return to work processes for long-term leave[2] and for intermittent FMLA for all SFMTA employees. The unit has the following functions:

- Reviews leave requests for eligibility and completeness.
- Ensures compliance with FMLA eligibility and notice requirements.
- Approves or denies leave requests.
- Refers leave cases to the appropriate unit in the Human Resources Division (including the Workers' Compensation and ADA units).
- Enters and maintains leave information in HRDB.
- Responds to questions and inquiries from employees and supervisors in person at the Return to Work window, on the telephone, or via e-mail correspondence.
- Attends biweekly "In and Out" meetings with the ADA, Workers' Compensation, and Employee and Labor Relations units of the Human Resources Division and with superintendents in the Transit Division.
- Prepares and presents reports biweekly on long-term leave trends.
- Reviews documentation to begin the return to work process.

Exhibit 10 shows SFMTA's process for requesting long-term leave.

[2] Defined as leave of greater than five consecutive work days. Includes long-term leave for FMLA.

EXHIBIT 10 SFMTA's Process for Employees Requesting Long-Term Leave


Employee submits completed request for leave form to supervisor
Supervisor reviews, signs, and submits to RTW[a]
Reviews for:
-Leave dates and duration
-FMLA[b] eligibility
-Absence history
-Timely submission of leave request
RTW reviews and processes request
Long-term/FMLA Leave
Intermittent FMLA Leave
RTW approves leave?
No
RTW notifies supervisor by e-mail
RTW enters leave information into HRDB[c]
Data includes:
-Employee information
-Leave dates
-HR staff notes
Pending Workers' Compensation case?
Yes
RTW gives documents to Workers' Compensation
Long-term leave designated as FMLA?
Yes
RTW mails employee letter of verification designating the leave as covered under FMLA
RTW determines leave packet is complete?
No
RTW mails employee letter stating reason leave packet is incomplete or denied and e-mails copy to supervisor
Yes
RTW inputs leave information into HRDB
RTW mails employee letter of verification with frequency and duration of intermittent FMLA leave

Notes:
[a] RTW: Return to Work unit
[b] FMLA: Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993
[c] HRDB: Human Resource Database System, a Microsoft Access database

Source: Auditor's analysis based on observations of process

The Return to Work Process

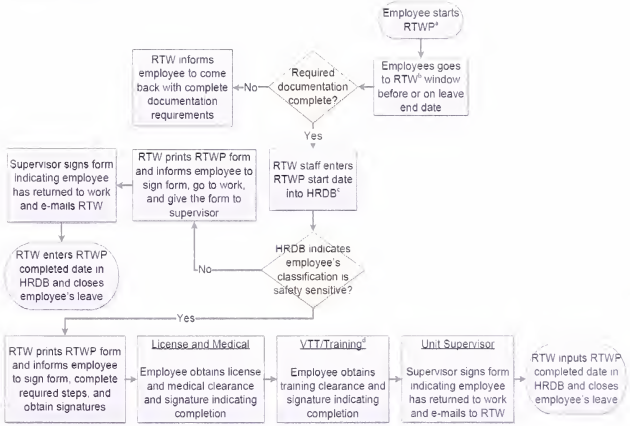
The process for an employee returning to work also begins with the Return to Work unit. The return to work process for employees performing safety-sensitive functions must comply with several steps to return to full duty, while all other positions only require that employees

obtain their supervisor's signature to confirm that they have fully returned to work. These employees must obtain clearance from the License and Medical unit and Training (VTT) unit before returning to work.

In compliance with the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the City's Department of Human Resources' Substance Abuse Policy requires that employees performing safety-sensitive functions are subject to pre-employment, post-accident, random, follow-up, and return to duty drug and alcohol testing. SFMTA employees performing safety-sensitive functions include transit operators, track maintenance workers, electrical transit system mechanics, and automotive machinists.

Exhibit 11 details the return to work process.

EXHIBIT 11 SFMTA's Process for Employees Returning to Work


Employee starts RTWP[a]
Employees goes to RTW[b] window before or on leave end date
Required documentation complete?
No
RTW informs employee to come back with complete documentation requirements
Yes
RTW staff enters RTWP start date into HRDB[c]
RTW prints RTWP form and informs employee to sign form, go to work, and give the form to supervisor
Supervisor signs form indicating employee has returned to work and e-mails RTW
HRDB indicates employee's classification is safety sensitive?
No
RTW enters RTWP completed date in HRDB and closes employee's leave
Yes
RTW prints RTWP form and informs employee to sign form, complete required steps, and obtain signatures
License and Medical
Employee obtains license and medical clearance and signature indicating completion
VTT/Training[d]
Employee obtains training clearance and signature indicating completion
Unit Supervisor
Supervisor signs form indicating employee has returned to work and e-mails to RTW
RTW inputs RTWP completed date in HRDB and closes employee's leave

Notes:
[a] RTWP: Return to Work Process
[b] RTW: Return to Work Unit
[c] HRDB: Human Resource Database System, a Microsoft Access database
[d] VTT/Training: Verification of Transit Training/Training Unit, Human Resources Division

Source: Auditor's analysis based on observations of process

Timekeeping and Payroll Processes

Although SFMTA units use varied timekeeping processes, all payroll is processed centrally by SFMTA's Human Resources unit before the data is sent to the Controller's Payroll and Personnel Services Division to issue paychecks.

In August 2012 SFMTA started entering some time and attendance data directly in the eMerge PeopleSoft system[3] (PeopleSoft) and some SFMTA units began self-service PeopleSoft time entry in April 2014. As of July 2015 SFMTA was still using other time-entry systems that interface at least some of their employee time records with PeopleSoft from non-PeopleSoft local timekeeping systems.

The local timekeeping systems that SFMTA uses are the Trapeze system (Trapeze) and Progress Reporter system[4] of the Capital Projects Controls System. Trapeze is used for scheduling, dispatching, and timekeeping for transit operators, and Progress Reporter is used for project management, accounting, and timekeeping processes for employees in the Capital Programs & Construction Division. Both systems interface directly with PeopleSoft.

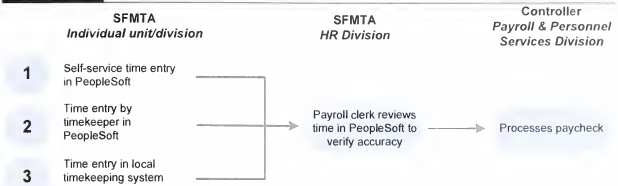
Also, some units of the Finance and Information Technology Division implemented a time clock solution and began reporting time using the TimeLink system, which reports time directly to PeopleSoft.

Exhibit 12 summarizes SFMTA's timekeeping and payroll process.

[3] PeopleSoft is maintained by the Controller's eMerge Division.

[4] According to SFMTA, the Progress Reporter system was replaced by a new system in fiscal year 2014-15, HMS Time Control, which interfaces directly with PeopleSoft.

EXHIBIT 12 **SFMTA's Human Resources Division Reviews Data From Various Timekeeping Systems Before Sending Payroll Information to the Controller**



Source: Auditor's observations and analysis of process

Objectives

The objectives of this audit were to:

1. Assess SFMTA's processes for absence management, including to:
   a. Assess the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and oversight.
   b. Determine the impact of absenteeism on departmental resources and operations.
2. Determine strategies for SFMTA to measure, mitigate, and manage employee absences, including leading practices in absence management.

Scope and Methodology

The audit examined the operations of all SFMTA divisions related to absence management and considered data from various sources. To conduct the audit, the audit team:

What we did.

- Reviewed key documents related to absence management at SFMTA, including policies, procedures, guidelines, and labor agreements between SFMTA and organizations representing SFMTA employees in various job classifications.
- Reviewed applicable laws and regulations regarding absence management.
- Interviewed 41 SFMTA staff and management

personnel in all major divisions to understand procedures, common practices, and controls related to absence management.

- Surveyed 12 other jurisdictions for relevant data related to absence management programs.
- Using fiscal year 2013-14 payroll data from eMerge PeopleSoft, the citywide payroll system, determined SFMTA's absenteeism rate and compared it across classifications.
- Analyzed trends in the amount of leave taken, types of leave, and frequency of leave by job classification, division, and labor agreement.
- Observed timekeeping and payroll processes at 11 SFMTA units.
- Reviewed and analyzed SFMTA's staffing analyses for transit operators and parking control officers.
- Observed and assessed the overall effectiveness of SFMTA's long-term leave management process.
- Randomly selected and tested a sample of long-term leave requests for 42 employees (66 instances) of the 1,716 employees with long-term leave requests during July 1, 2013, through December 24, 2014, to assess whether there were adequate procedures and proper documentation.
- Randomly selected and tested a sample of 22 employees (of 782 employees who requested intermittent FMLA leave during July 1, 2013, through December 31, 2014) and tested intermittent FMLA leave requests to assess whether there were adequate procedures, proper documentation, and compliance with FMLA regulations
- Identified employees with unclear leave status, reviewed documentation related to leave history, and assessed the return to work process for these employees.

Focus groups

During April through June 2015, the audit conducted 12 focus group sessions with employees from various divisions, job classifications, and job levels, from staff to mid-level managers. Each focus group session lasted approximately 1.5 hours and included time for each participant to complete a written survey. The analysis of the completed survey questionnaires, which covered the same topics discussed in the focus group sessions, yielded results that add to the audit's documentary evidence from the focus group participants. More specifically, CSA:

- Consulted with a focus group expert to develop focus group sessions and prepare materials, including invitation letters to participants, discussion questions, and visual aids.
- Coordinated with SFMTA personnel to solicit volunteers for the focus group sessions.
- Randomly and purposefully selected focus group participants and invited them to participate.
- Facilitated 12 focus group sessions with 116 participants on their perspectives and experiences related to absence management. The participants represented 26 job classifications.
- Administered 132 surveys to focus group participants and other employees on their perspectives and experiences related to absence management. The respondents represented 19 job classifications.
- Analyzed the results of the focus group discussions and surveys.

Statement of Auditing Standards

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. These standards require planning and performing the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. CSA believes that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives.

CHAPTER 1 – SFMTA Must Improve Its Organizational Culture to Increase Employee Engagement and Better Manage Employee Absenteeism

Organizational Culture

Management sets the tone for an organization's ethics, accountability, and emphasis on processes and controls, and this tone significantly influences the organization's employees. The behavior and actions of employees will naturally gravitate toward what they witness in the behavior and actions of their supervisors, line managers, and upper management.

Organizational culture is a key characteristic of how an organization operates and its success.

Organizational culture influences how an organization operates and can be a key characteristic of its success. In its study of organizational culture, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) defines organizational culture as the underlying assumptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, and expectations shared by an organization's members.[5] An organization's culture is built on the norms, values, and beliefs that provide the framework for how the organization will deliver service and interact with its employees.[6] It is commonly interpreted as "the way we do things around here."[7]

Mutual respect, teamwork, and professionalism are paramount to the success of an organization.

Creating and continuously strengthening an environment that embraces and reflects the values of mutual respect, teamwork, and professionalism are paramount to the success of an organization.[8] These values are essential for creating an organizational culture that engages employees. Research on both private and public sector organizations has found that increased levels of engagement—generally defined as the sense of purpose and commitment employees feel toward their employer and its mission—can lead to better organizational

[5] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Organizational Culture: Techniques Companies Use to Perpetuate or Change Beliefs and Values*, February 1992.

[6] New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NYMTA) Blue Ribbon Panel on Workforce Development, *Engaging, Recognizing, and Developing the MTA Workforce*, November 2007.

[7] Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors, *Culture and the Role of Internal Audit: Looking Below the Surface*, June 2014.

[8] Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Blue Ribbon Panel on Workforce Development, *Engaging, Recognizing, and Developing the MTA Workforce*, November 2007.

performance.[9] This includes increased employee performance, higher customer service ratings, fewer safety incidents, and less absenteeism and turnover.

For example, a 2007 New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NYMTA) Blue Ribbon Panel report cited the need to create a cohesive and collaborative organizational culture that helps breed success.[10] The panel found that vestiges of the "my way or the highway" attitude were harming the agency and needed to be replaced with more team-based and collaborative approaches. The report recommended that NYMTA's goal should be to "foster a work environment that reflects the core values of mutual respect, teamwork, and quality customer service through a culture that takes pride in delivering services to the public and in developing its employees."

Higher employee engagement in federal organizations has led to staff using fewer sick days.

The federal government found that its agencies with the highest employee engagement levels had staff that used an average of three fewer sick days per year than employees did at agencies with the lowest engagement levels. The federal government also found that agencies with the highest levels of employee engagement had approximately 50 percent fewer equal employment opportunity complaints and a lost time case rate[11] of approximately one-third that of agencies with the lowest employee engagement.

Long-term effort and leadership commitment is required to create an organizational culture in which employees feel valued, respected, and engaged.

Creating an organizational culture in which employees feel valued, respected, and engaged requires a long-term effort and leadership commitment. For example, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Patent Office) began its effort to change the organization's culture and improve employee engagement in 2009, when its *Best Places to Work* ranking was 105th of 216 federal agency subcomponents. By 2013 the Patent Office had improved its ranking to 1st of 300 subcomponents. This improvement took more than four years and required the

[9] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Federal Workforce: Additional Analysis and Sharing of Promising Practices Could Improve Employee Engagement and Performance*, July 2015.

[10] The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is a public benefit corporation chartered by the State of New York. Known as MTA, the organization is referred to as NYMTA in this audit report to distinguish it from SFMTA.

[11] The number of instances (per 100 employees) during the year when employees lost time at work due to work-related injury or illness. U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008, p. 34.

commitment of top leadership to building and maintaining a healthy workplace culture. The Patent Office also relied heavily on information collected through the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and the *Best Places to Work* survey to pinpoint agency-wide challenges and focus its efforts.

An organization's leadership drives workforce engagement through its:

- Integrity and communication.
- Interpersonal relationships, including trust, respect, and support.
- Feelings of motivation and competency related to the leader's role in the workplace.

Senior officials must articulate and live by organizational values to demonstrate to employees that top management is committed to making cultural changes.[12]

A data-driven process is critical to creating successful employee engagement programs and initiatives.

Creating successful employee engagement programs and initiatives is a data-driven process. All six federal agencies profiled in *Best Places to Work* attributed their success in either improving or maintaining employee engagement to being able to draw on multiple data sources, in addition to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, to "take the pulse" of the organization and identify areas for improvement. Besides employee survey data, agencies have used other indicators, including turnover rates, equal employment opportunity complaints, focus groups, and town hall meetings, to understand how their employees perceive the organization, gauge employee engagement, and identify areas for improvement.

An effective organizational culture includes respect, communication, and accountability.

SFMTA's core values, strategic goals, and leadership commitments include the common elements of a successful organizational culture and workforce engagement strategy: respect, communication and collaboration, and accountability. These elements are important for setting the tone of the organization.

[12] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Organizational Culture: Techniques Companies Use to Perpetuate or Change Beliefs and Values*, February 1992.

Exhibit 13 summarizes the elements of a successful organizational culture as found in these reports and in SFMTA's core values, strategic goals, and leadership commitments.

EXHIBIT 13 SFMTA's Stated Values, Goals, and Commitments Cover Every Element of a Successful Organizational Culture

Element	Source					
	NYMTA[a]	IIA[b]	GAO[c]	SFMTA Core Values[d]	SFMTA Strategic Goals[d]	SFMTA Leadership Commitments
Respect	✓		✓	✓		✓
Communication, Collaboration, Teamwork	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Accountability			✓	✓	✓	✓
Professionalism	✓					✓
Leadership	✓			✓		✓
Integrity, Honesty, Authenticity, Trust		✓	✓	✓		✓
Effectiveness				✓		
Innovation			✓		✓	
Commitment						✓
Transparency		✓				✓
Delegation						✓

Sources:

[a] NYMTA Blue Ribbon Panel on Workforce Development. *Engaging, Recognizing, and Developing the MTA Workforce*, November 2007.

[b] Institute of Internal Auditors, Austin Chapter, *2009-2010 Research Project – Internal Audit's Role in Promoting a Positive Tone @ the Top*, March 2010.

[c] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Federal Workforce: Additional Analysis and Sharing of Promising Practices Could Improve Employee Engagement and Performance*, July 2015.

[d] SFMTA Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2013-2018.

Finding 1.1

SFMTA must improve organizational culture to increase employee engagement and better manage employee absenteeism.

Focus group results indicate that SFMTA's organizational culture has affected—and has the potential to address—absenteeism.

The agency has made efforts to focus on respect, collaboration and communication, and accountability in its values, strategic goals, and leadership commitments and their importance in ensuring a positive organizational culture. Despite this, SFMTA staff who participated in the audit's focus groups indicated that the organization's culture surrounding respect, communication, and accountability has negatively affected—and has the potential to improve—absenteeism in the agency.

Focus group results indicate a need for greater professional respect and communication at SFMTA.

A theme heard from many focus group participants, especially transit operators, is that managers lack professional respect for the work the employees perform, which stifles their motivation to work and contributes to the department's low morale. Many focus group participants also stated that communication between staff and management—and even among staff—is nonexistent, disrespectful, or ineffective.

Understanding SFMTA's organizational culture, particularly in relation to absence management, was essential in carrying out CSA's audit objectives, which included assessing the effectiveness of SFMTA's policies, procedures, and oversight, and determining strategies for managing employee absences. To gather staff's insights, opinions, and beliefs about absences in the agency, CSA facilitated focus groups and administered written survey questionnaires involving SFMTA staff from various divisions. CSA designed the focus groups and survey to inform the audit of the:

- Reasons absenteeism occurs.
- Impacts of absenteeism.
- Possible solutions to manage staff absences.

Focus groups provide valuable insight into an organization's culture.

Focus groups are most useful as an audit data collection method when the audit objectives include one or more of the following:

- Exploring, piloting, or refining a program concept.
- Identifying and understanding participants' goals, expectations, and views of the efficacy of an established or proposed program.
- Documenting experiences in implementing a program.
- Describing differing outcomes across people or sites.[13]

By providing insight into a variety of norms, attitudes, and practices across a range of stakeholders, focus groups facilitate a deeper understanding of an organization's cultural drivers, which affect an organization's ability to execute its goals and mission.

[13] RAND Corporation, *Performance Audit Handbook: Routes to Effective Evaluation*, 2009.

Exhibit 14 shows the focus groups and the number of participants in each. For detailed results of the focus group discussions and surveys, see appendices B and C.

EXHIBIT 14 Absence Management Focus Groups Undertaken for This Audit

Focus Group	Number of Participants	Number of Completed Survey Questionnaires
Transit Operators – Potrero	9	9
Transit Operators – Flynn	9	9
Transit Operators – Kirkland	20	20
Transit Operators – Presidio	6	6
Transit Operators – Green	8	8
Transit Operators – Woods	10	10
Transit Operators – Cable Car*	-	7
Transit Staff – Cable Car*	-	2
Bus & Rail Maintenance*	5	12
Parking Enforcement Officers	18	18
Administrative & Professional Staff – Session 1	9	9
Administrative & Professional Staff – Session 2	6	6
Transit Superintendents	6	6
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	10	10
Total	**116**	**132**

* No participants volunteered for a focus group at the Transit Division's Cable Car unit, so CSA visited the unit and administered survey questionnaires to staff on hand. Sixteen employees completed survey questionnaires: seven by transit operators, seven by maintenance staff, and two by transit staff.

Source: CSA

SFMTA's employee satisfaction survey had a low response rate, less than one-third of the agency's workforce.

SFMTA annually surveys its employees to solicit feedback on their satisfaction with various components of organizational culture. The 2015 survey had a response rate of less than one-third of SFMTA's entire workforce,[14] which is low when compared to the average response rate of 48 percent for the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint survey.[15] The response rate for the Transit Division, which accounts for more than half of SFMTA's employees, was only 13 percent.

Based on the 1,565 responses to SFMTA's 2015 survey (31 percent of the 5,056 total full-time equivalent SFMTA employees in 2015), half of the respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied in response to

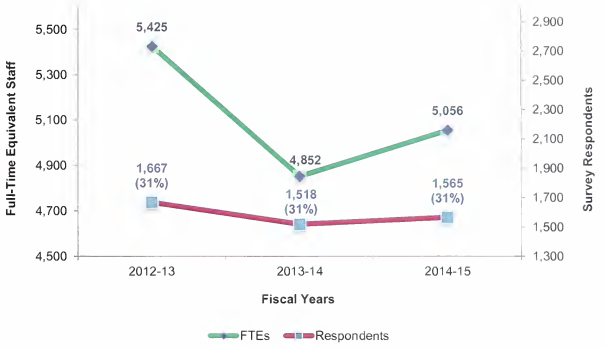
[14] 31 percent, based on 1,565 responding employees of 5,056 total full-time equivalent SFMTA employees in that year.

[15] The 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey had more than 400,000 respondents from 82 agencies.

questions related to their overall experience in the workplace. However, respondents from the Transit Division gave significantly lower ratings on these questions than did SFMTA employees overall.[16] Despite these results, this audit's focus group results indicate that SFMTA's organizational culture needs to greatly enhance its *professional respect and communication among all employees.*

Exhibit 15 summarizes the SFMTA annual employee survey's response rate, by fiscal year, from 2012-13 through 2014-15.

EXHIBIT 15 The Overall Response Rate for SFMTA's Employee Survey Was 31 Percent From Fiscal Year 2012-13 Through 2014-15



Source: Auditor's analysis of SFMTA data.

SFMTA's annual survey includes questions regarding satisfaction with work environment, resources, communication, and accountability. In the 2015 survey, a new question regarding confidence in executive

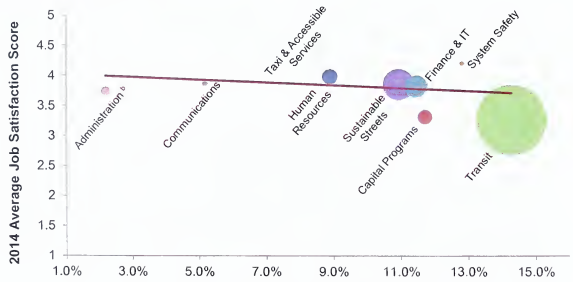
[16] On a scale of 1 to 5, a rating of 5 indicates *strongly agree* or *very satisfied* and a rating of 1 indicates *strongly disagree* or *very dissatisfied.* The Transit Division's average response to 19 statements affirming positive experience and improvements in the areas of the department's mission, goals, and commitments was 3.2, compared to all SFMTA respondents, whose average response was 3.8. This difference is statistically significant.

leadership at SFMTA garnered the lowest level of satisfaction, with an average response of 3.4. However, overall satisfaction increased from an average of 2.3 in 2013 to 3.8 in 2014 and 2015.

Consistent with public and private research mentioned earlier in the chapter, SFMTA divisions with higher employee job satisfaction ratings generally have lower absenteeism rates. Conversely, SFMTA divisions with higher absenteeism rates generally have lower employee job satisfaction ratings. For example, the Transit Division, the largest SFMTA division with 3,554 FTEs, has the highest absenteeism rate and the lowest job satisfaction score, which is consistent with federal research on employee engagement and performance.[17]

Exhibit 16 shows the average job satisfaction score and absenteeism rate by SFMTA division for 2014.

EXHIBIT 16 2014 Average Job Satisfaction Score[a] and Absenteeism Rate by Division



Notes: Bubble size represents the number of FTEs in each division: Administration – 60 FTE, Capital Programs – 156 FTE, Communications – 23 FTE, Finance & IT – 358 FTE, Human Resources – 174 FTE, Sustainable Streets – 687 FTE, System Safety – 13 FTE, Taxi & Accessible Services – 37 FTE, Transit – 3,554 FTE.

[a] Job satisfaction scores come from the average responses to Question 19 of SFMTA's employee survey.

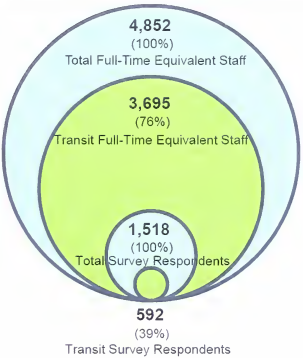
[b] Administration Division contains survey data from the Government Affairs, Executive Director, and Administration divisions.

Source: Auditor's analysis of SFMTA data.

[17] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Federal Workforce: Additional Analysis and Sharing of Promising Practices Could Improve Employee Engagement and Performance*, July 2015.

Exhibit 17 shows the percentage of Transit Division survey respondents for fiscal year 2013-14.

EXHIBIT 17 The Transit Division Employs Three-Quarters of SFMTA's Full-Time Equivalent Staff but Accounts for Only 39 Percent of Survey Respondents, Fiscal Year 2013-14



Source: Auditor's analysis of SFMTA data.

The response rate of SFMTA's employee survey is the lowest we found.

Many leading governments survey their employees to gauge success and identify areas for improvement. The federal government uses a Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, the results of which were most recently released in 2015. This tool measures employees' perceptions on all aspects of their employment experience. Other jurisdictions also have employee engagement surveys. Of the employee surveys the audit considered, SFMTA's has the lowest response rate.

Exhibit 18 shows the response rates of various jurisdictions' employee surveys.

EXHIBIT 18 SFMTA's Employee Survey Response Rate Is Significantly Lower Than Those of Other Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Number of Employees in Organization	Number of Responses to Survey	Response Rates
Washington Metro[a]	11,939	8,117	68%
Federal[b,c]	848,237	421,748	50%
Denver Regional[b]	2,700	1,363	50%
King County[b,d]	4,520	2,161	48%
SFMTA[b]	5,056	1,565	31%

Notes:
[a] 2014 employee survey.
[b] 2015 employee survey.
[c] Survey respondents constitute full- and part-time and headquarters and field employees.
[d] King County Department of Transportation – Transit employees only.

Source: Auditor's analysis.

Compared to a federal employee survey, SFMTA's survey does not emphasize job satisfaction or work-life balance.

In contrast to SFMTA's survey, the federal survey contains a broader range of questions related to organizational culture, which are divided among five employee engagement categories. While SFMTA's survey contains 19 questions, the federal survey contains 84 questions, with at least 9 questions per category.

The surveys of three other jurisdictions contain from 51 to 71 questions, with at least one question in all but one category.[18]

Exhibit 19 contrasts the composition of questions in other jurisdictions' surveys compared to SFMTA's survey.

[18] Question categories are based on the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

EXHIBIT 19 SFMTA's Survey Emphasizes Employees' Experience at Work, Not Job Satisfaction or Work-Life Balance

Question Category[a]	Number of Questions									
	Federal	%	Denver Regional[b]	%	King County[b]	%	Wash-ington Metro[c]	%	SFMTA[b]	%
Experience at Work	40	48%	27	53%	31	44%	27	45%	14	74%
Work Unit	9	11%	7	14%	12	17%	10	17%	2	11%
Agency	13	15%	13	25%	19	27%	11	18%	2	11%
Job Satisfaction	9	11%	3	6%	8	11%	12	20%	1	5%
Work-Life Balance	13	15%	1	2%	1	1%	-	-	-	-
Total	**84**	**100%**	**51**	**100%**	**71**	**100%**	**60**	**100%**	**19**	**100%**

Notes:
[a] Question categories are based on the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.
[b] Based on 2015 employee survey.
[c] Based on 2014 employee survey.

Source: Auditor's analysis.

GAO analyzed the results of the federal survey to determine which questions were the strongest indicators of employee engagement. Exhibit 20 compares the questions that GAO found had the strongest correlation with employee engagement to questions asked by other jurisdictions. The comparison is based on the intent of the specific questions found in the federal survey and shows that most of these types of questions are in other jurisdictions' surveys but not in SFMTA's survey.

EXHIBIT 20 SFMTA's Employee Survey Omits Several Types of Questions That Are Most Strongly Correlated With Employee Engagement

Federal Employee Survey Viewpoint Questions That Strongly Correlate With Employee Engagement	Sample Questions			
	Denver Regional	King County	Washington Metro	SFMTA
Constructive Performance Conversation My supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance.	I receive clear and regular feedback on how well I do my work.	My supervisor gives me regular, constructive feedback on my performance.	I receive clear and regular feedback on my job performance.	My manager/ supervisor provides the support I need to do my best work.
Career Development and Training I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.	Your opportunities to achieve your personal career objectives at the organization.	I have sufficient opportunities to attend trainings to improve my skills and knowledge.	I have opportunity to learn and develop at WMATA.	None
Work-life balance My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues.	The organization supports me in achieving a reasonable balance between my work life and my personal life.	I am supported in balancing my work and home life.	None	None
Inclusive Work Environment Supervisors work well with employees of different backgrounds.	The organization understands and appreciates differences among employees (for example, gender, race, religion, age, nationality, etc.)	My supervisor takes actions to create an inclusive, fair, respectful and equitable workplace.	Differences among people are respected and valued at WMATA.	None
Employee Involvement How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?	I have opportunities to have my ideas adopted and put into use.	None	Cooperation and sharing of ideas and resources across WMATA is encouraged.	None
Communication from Management How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization?	None	None	None.	None

Source: Auditor's analysis of GAO's analysis of 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, SFMTA's 2015 employee survey, and employee surveys of other jurisdictions.

Tone at (and from) the top is paramount to creating an effective organizational culture.

According to the Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government,[19] promulgated by GAO, an organization's oversight body and management should demonstrate a commitment to integrity, have ethical values, and lead by example. Three attributes that contribute to the design, implementation, and operating effectiveness of an organization are:

- Tone at the top
- Standards of conduct
- Adherence to standards of conduct

According to GAO standards, management of an organization should establish standards of conduct to communicate the expectations concerning integrity and ethical values and communicate those standards through policies, operating principles, or guidelines to the organization.

Executive management and its leadership must demonstrate commitment to the organization's values, mission, and strategic goals.

The standards also state that the oversight body and management demonstrate the importance of integrity and ethical values through their directives, attitudes, and behavior reinforcing the commitment to doing what is right. Leading by example demonstrates the organization's values, philosophy, and operating style to all stakeholders, setting the tone at the top and throughout the organization, which is fundamental to an effective internal control system. The standards state that in larger entities, such as SFMTA, various layers of management in the organizational structure may also set the tone in the middle.

According to the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO),[20] the chief executive officer is the person ultimately responsible for the effectiveness of an agency's operations, philosophy, and management style and sets the "tone at the top" that affects integrity, ethics, and other factors that influence the agency's effectiveness and operations. To accomplish this, the chief executive provides leadership and direction to senior managers, who, in turn, assign

[19] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, September 2014.

[20] COSO is a joint initiative of five private sector organizations in the areas of accounting, auditing, and finance that develops frameworks and guidance on enterprise risk management, internal control, and fraud deterrence.

cascading responsibility to other managers to carry out their spheres of responsibility.

SFMTA has implemented several programs and initiatives to improve its organizational culture.

The SFMTA director has established a number of programs and initiatives aimed at operationalizing the mission, goals, and leadership commitments throughout the organization. These include:

- Soliciting employee feedback through its agency-wide survey.
- Establishing an Absence Management Task Force to set standards for communicating consistent attendance guidelines.
- Launching an employee attendance dashboard as a centralized tool to manage and monitor employee absences.
- Starting its Culture Change Initiative Re-Boot, which includes leadership awareness, employee engagement, communication, workplace improvements, and talent development.
- Hosting town hall meetings with groups of front-line staff, such as transit operators and parking enforcement officers, to cover highlights of key accomplishments and staff recognition.[21]

To improve employee engagement and attendance, SFMTA must do more to enhance professional respect, communication, and accountability.

These programs and initiatives indicate SFMTA's desire to improve its organizational culture. However, this audit's focus group results clearly indicate that more needs to be done to ensure that all staff are valued, encouraged to effectively communicate and collaborate, and held accountable through compassionate leadership.

Finding 1.1.1

Employees throughout SFMTA do not feel respected as professionals.

Professional respect encourages greater job satisfaction and a sense of belonging.

According to SFMTA staff, SFMTA management does not respect its staff. Respect is realized when individuals act in ways that show appreciation and recognition in a manner that conveys that the other is valued. As such, a respectful organization recognizes that its employees have rights, opinions, wishes, experience, and competence and demonstrates that recognition.

[21] According to SFMTA, these town hall meetings occur semiannually.

The focus groups strongly asserted that all SFMTA employees need to better understand "respect," an adopted core leadership value.

Although SFMTA management has included respect as a core leadership value, focus group results indicate that this core value needs to be understood, articulated, internalized, and acted on by employees at all levels of the organization. Respectful treatment of all employees and respect for their ideas are leading contributors to job satisfaction and to employees' sense of belonging at work.

Exhibit 21 lists some comments made during the focus groups regarding the lack of professional respect felt by SFMTA staff.

EXHIBIT 21 Focus Group Participants Perceive a Lack of Professional Respect at SFMTA

Focus Group	Comment*
Transit Operators – Presidio	• Need to feel valued and treated with dignity.
Transit Operators – Flynn	• You feel forced to explain your sickness and prove your sickness (e.g., emergency) to manager. • You don't want everyone to know your business. • You feel violated as it relates to your personal business.
Transit Operators – Kirkland	• We are not respected. • Central Control disrespects and belittles us and makes us feel small.
Administrative & Professional Staff	• People should feel more invested in the agency as a whole or more empowered with work that is connected across divisions. • Employees need to understand how their work fits into the bigger picture and how they are connected to their stakeholders (colleagues in same/other divisions) and who is impacted. • Staff needs to have the opportunity to share in the full development of that work; the value of the work is noted when you see the process.
Transit Superintendents	• We need to create some messaging about people's values and commitment to the organization and services.
Transit Operators – Green	• First thing I would do is treat employees well and with professional respect so they would do a better job for you and increase productivity.

*Note: Some comments have been paraphrased for brevity.

Source: Comments recorded by during focus groups conducted by CSA

There is a widespread perception of a lack of professional respect for employees and their work.

The findings from the focus groups illustrate that a perceived lack of professional respect manifests itself in different ways across SFMTA. In response to SFMTA's employee satisfaction survey questions measuring respect and support from management, more than one-third (36 percent) of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Transit Operators indicate feeling discouraged and unsupported by others.

Transit Operators. Transit operators expressed that the disrespect they perceive has causes that are both within and outside the organization. All transit operator focus groups expressed the need for more professional respect from their managers and central control. Some transit operators indicated they feel:

- Undervalued for the critical service they provide to the public and for the years of service they have invested in SFMTA as public servants.
- Discouraged and unsupported by management and central control, as well as by their union.

Parking enforcement personnel assert management does not care and feel stressed due to inappropriate customer behavior.

Parking Enforcement Staff. Parking enforcement officers also feel disrespect from causes that are both internal and external to the organization, resulting in low morale. They feel as though their management does not care about them. Parking enforcement officers also feel stressed while on the job because they have to deal with angry customers, some of whom become physically abusive or violent.

Administrative employees state they sometimes take leave because of a lack of respect.

Administrative Staff. Professional administrative employees discussed feeling that there is a lack of respect for their work and that this results from internal (organizational) causes. In turn, some indicated, this leads them to need a break and to decompress. They offered this as one reason they take leave.

Staff links the perceived disrespect to absenteeism.

Many focus group participants reported that the lack of respect they have felt contributed to their decision to miss work in the past, negatively affecting their productivity. Of the 12 focus groups, participants in:

- 11 (92 percent) of them cited stress or fatigue as a cause of absenteeism.
- 4 (33 percent) of them cited workplace dissatisfaction or low morale.

- 2 (17 percent) of them cited a dirty workplace as the reason for absences.

Stress, fatigue, workplace dissatisfaction, and being undervalued affect attendance.

Transit operators, parking enforcement personnel, and professional administrative staff all stated that reasons for missing work include stress and fatigue and workplace dissatisfaction caused by demanding schedules, dealing with difficult customers, and feeling undervalued as employees.

Focus group participants expressed feeling disrespected by management, which is manifested by the fact that their jobs do not allow them to go to the bathroom or take a break when necessary and by a lack of a clean and sanitary work environment. Focus group participants also associated the lack of cleanliness with increased health issues, resulting in additional absences.

One transit operator focus group discussed the concept of the bus as "their office" that is not kept clean or sanitized, particularly the driver's seat area. Absent a clean and sanitary environment, participants stated, both the driver and passengers are more prone to getting sick and spreading germs, and when transit operators become sick, it results in increased absences. In turn, focus group participants cited that this can negatively affect other transit operators (by increasing or affecting their workload) and the riding public, which relies on dependable and timely service on the agency's bus, train, and trolley routes.

In general, transit operators perceive that management is ambivalent toward their needs for a clean and sanitary work environment and disregards their need to take breaks, which they consider disrespectful.

Focus group results make it clear that SFMTA staff needs compassionate leaders and that SFMTA leadership's goal related to respect has not been achieved.

SFMTA would greatly benefit from having management consistently and uniformly demonstrate elements of compassionate leadership. This style of leadership embodies respect and open communication, which are integral to SFMTA's core values. A compassionate leader understands employees' motivators, hopes, and difficulties, exhibits kindness and empathy, and works to find the correct support mechanism that enables others to achieve their full potential. In turn, an organization led by compassionate leaders generates a positive impact

on the organization's morale and overall productivity.

SFMTA has stated workplace respect as a goal, and the statements in Exhibit 22 indicate that SFMTA needs to do more to enhance its capacity to lead in a compassionate manner that addresses its core values.

EXHIBIT 22 **Focus Group Participants Would Like to (but Do Not) See Compassionate Leadership at SFMTA**

Focus Group	Comment*
Transit Operators – Woods	• Transit superintendents are not approachable.
Parking Enforcement Officers	• We need to come together. Leadership needs to get out of the office and [be] part of the solution.
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	• We need to migrate towards a collaborative work environment, instead of what we have, which is a hierarchical, top-down environment, if you want stellar results. • We need to address the issues within our employee survey to address morale.
Transit Superintendents	• I lean towards being empathetic. I call it counseling because people will most often come out and share what is going on (chronic or other issues) and all you can do to support, that is let them know what their options are.
Transit Operators – Kirkland	• Leadership needs to make sure staff understands policies and procedures and when someone has a problem, show these people that we care and discuss how we can help.
Transit Operators – Green	• As far as upper management, I think they should be trained to drive a bus and drive a week or two (like Undercover Boss). Walk a day in my shoes. • Management should get more information instead of just giving out sick [leave] abuse letters. • Actively listen to transit operators instead of putting people into a box. • I would like upper management (whoever makes the decisions) to sit in my seat with me to see the things that I get asked to see, do what I do, and sit down together before decisions get made. • I believe that they know what is going on and what we are going through but they do not care.

*Note: Some comments have been paraphrased for brevity.

Source: Comments recorded during focus groups conducted by CSA.

Finding 1.1.2

SFMTA must improve communication to facilitate collaboration and enhance organizational performance.

Focus group participants expressed a need for greater collaboration among themselves, SFMTA leaders, and their unions.

The focus groups discussed the need for better communication that is open, transparent, and allows for the free flow of relevant information and greater collaboration. Most focus groups also expressed a desire for increased collaboration among staff, management, and unions.

Communication is the basis for management and staff to make sense of the organization, what it is, and what it means. It provides individuals with important information about the organization's goals to be achieved and facilitates decision-making and problem solving.

Lack of effective communication negatively impacts job satisfaction, absenteeism, and delivery of public services.

Effective communication requires management to engage employees by soliciting participation and feedback. Lack of effective communication negatively impacts job satisfaction and absenteeism. According to GAO, federal employees who were most satisfied with their management's communication had, on average, an employee engagement score 12 percentage points higher than those who were least satisfied. Employees who feel unimportant and disengaged may find it harder to attend work in such an environment. As a result, absenteeism in the organization becomes an issue and absences from work have widespread repercussions, ranging from increased individual workloads to hampered delivery of services to the public.

Focus groups of transit operators and parking enforcement personnel reported having low morale and high stress, which contribute to absenteeism.

Although SFMTA management has committed to effective communication and collaboration, as reflected in its core values and leadership commitments, focus group results indicate that transit operators and parking enforcement staff feel little appreciation and support from management, thus creating an environment of low morale and high stress levels. This, in turn, results in staff absences, which negatively affect the delivery of services to the public.

Exhibit 23 lists some of the comments made during the focus groups regarding the need for better communication as perceived by SFMTA staff.

EXHIBIT 23 Focus Group Participants Want Improved Communication Between Staff and Management

Focus Group	Comment*
Parking Enforcement Officers	• We have a new director and I have never met him. • A leader comes and meets everyone and tells everyone what they plan on doing.
Transit Operators – Flynn	• Maybe SFMTA should hold focus groups like this where we can share regularly.
Transit Superintendents	• Educate employees in the beginning when they first get here. • We need a strong onboarding process.
Transit Operators – Potrero	• Educate staff on attendance policies.
Transit Operators – Kirkland	• Seems disconnected between transit divisions and downtown.
Administrative & Professional Staff	• Need to have more dialogue and on the value that employees bring to work. • Managers have different leading styles – some are more understanding and others are so secretive. • I suggested having work schedules be open so we know where managers are and can find them.

*Note: Some comments have been paraphrased for brevity.

Source: Comments recorded during focus groups conducted by CSA.

In response to questions related to the quality of communication in the workplace in SFMTA's employee satisfaction survey, one-third (33 percent) of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Effective communication involves information flowing down, up, and across the organization, which *builds employee confidence and involvement.*

Effective internal communication within an organization:

- Fundamentally drives business performance.
- Facilitates increased employee job satisfaction, morale, commitment, trust, and learning.
- Improves the communication climate and relationships with the public.

According to COSO, communicating pertinent information in a form and timeframe that enables people to carry out their responsibilities is an essential component of an internal control framework. Also, effective communication occurs when information flows down, up, and across the organization.

Employee engagement is a continuous process that requires organizations to create strategic communication plans that solicit and incorporate employee feedback and recharge their morale and support.

According to the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), communication is essential for building employee confidence and involvement in meeting an organization's objectives.[22] Further, SHRM believes that human resources departments will become the driving force behind an initiative to recharge employee morale and support of the organization's objectives, fostering an environment for engagement by developing targeted and proactive strategic communication plans. Specifically, an organization's human resources department should involve employees whenever possible, communicate all aspects of change throughout the organization, and personalize the communication.

Government agencies have employed various strategies to create communication channels that allow information to flow up, down, and across the organization, including:

- Quarterly webinars to communicate to staff in the field.[23]
- E-mail, video messages and site visits by the agency director.[24]
- Collecting employee suggestions online.[25]
- Conducting town hall meetings.[26]

These strategies keep employees informed and allow employees to offer feedback, which can result in increased employee engagement and workplace satisfaction.

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[22] Society for Human Resources Management, *Leveraging Employee Engagement for Competitive Advantage: HR's Strategic Role*, Alexandria, VA, 2007, p. 5.

[23] GAO-15-585, p. 17. Employees with the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) work mostly in the field and communicate with the head of the agency and senior leaders through quarterly webinars. Questions are submitted in advance and addressed during the webinar meetings.

[24] Deloitte and Partnership for Public Service, *Ten Years of the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Rankings: How Six Federal Agencies Improved Employee Satisfaction and Commitment*, December 2013, p. 8. The head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) communicates with his workforce largely through e-mails and video messages, but makes it a point to visit all of NASA's locations.

[25] Ibid., p. 14. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) established an online site to collect employee suggestions for workplace improvements, called Idea Hub, and implemented solutions submitted via the site to improve DOT's systems and work processes.

[26] Ibid., p. 14. The head of the agency also held town hall meetings and senior staff visited field offices to "take the pulse" of the organization.

Finding 1.1.3

The perceived lack of compassionate leadership decreases accountability and commitment to the organization.

The elements of compassionate leadership increase accountability and commitment.

Compassionate leaders work to create a person-centered and compassionate organizational culture where decision-making is based on inclusiveness, mutual respect, transparency, and authenticity. Accountability and commitment increases through compassionate leadership, which fosters treating employees with respect, valuing their opinions, and encouraging an environment that embodies open communication and collaboration, all of which align with SFMTA's organizational core values and leadership commitments.

Focus group results indicate that the lack of compassionate leadership negatively impacts accountability and commitment.

Some SFMTA employees believe that the lack of compassionate leadership has negatively impacted the level of accountability and commitment of staff to the organization. Focus group results indicate that:

- Management believes that employees use sick leave inappropriately.
- Staff believes that its sick leave usage is mostly health-related.
- Employees have used sick leave when they are dissatisfied with working conditions (that are not covered under Civil Service Rule 420).
- Staff asserts that SFMTA leave policies make it difficult to balance professional accountability with fulfilling personal obligations.

Exhibit 24 shows the causes of absenteeism discussed by the focus groups.

EXHIBIT 24 **The Causes of Absenteeism Most Frequently Cited by Focus Group Participants Are Health, Family, and Stress***

*Note: Most frequently cited as a percentage of causes stated by all 12 focus groups.

Source: Focus groups conducted by CSA.

Management believes employees are not held accountable for their actions and use sick leave inappropriately, negatively impacting operations.

According to the management focus groups, employees are not held accountable for their actions and take unfair advantage of sick leave rules because it is believed that employees who are not granted one-day vacations generally call in sick. In some cases, employees are issued sick leave abuse letters, but they may not correct the undesired behavior. In other instances, employees' undesired behavior is not addressed because leave-use thresholds have not been exceeded.

When employees call in sick, managers must promptly and appropriately change SFMTA operations, which negatively impact the organization and the services it provides. Participants in all 12 focus groups cited that their workload increases or is affected when their colleagues or staff are absent.

Other impacts of absenteeism that focus group participants discussed include:

- Decreased productivity
- Low morale and motivation
- Unnecessary stress
- Conflict between staff and management

- Increased health problems
- Adverse effects on transit service and the public

Despite management's belief, staff focus group results indicate that the leading causes of absences are health-related, for either oneself or one's family.

The City's sick leave policy allows employees to be absent for illness, disability, medical or dental appointments, and other reasons.

Civil Service Rule 420, which governs sick leave, states that employees are eligible for sick leave when they are:

> *... absent from their duties due to their own illness or disability, or that of a qualifying family member, including preventive care, such as medical or dental appointments, and employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.*

Other eligible uses of sick leave outlined in the rule include, quarantine, maternity/parental leave, and bereavement.

Some of the reported reasons for using sick leave are contrary to the City's sick leave policy and indicate a lack of accountability and commitment.

Although the leading reported causes of staff absences are appropriate under Civil Service Rule 420, other causes of absenteeism cited by staff are related to conditions not covered by the rule, including:

- Stress or fatigue (for example, inadequate breaks, increased workload, or a less-than-desirable work environment)
- Workplace dissatisfaction
- A dirty work environment
- "Burning" time

These reasons for unplanned absences indicate a lack of accountability and commitment to the organization by staff. Although management assigns employees their job duties, it is critical that staff takes personal accountability and ownership to help achieve organizational goals.

Some SFMTA policies on leave usage make it difficult for employees to balance their professional accountability with their need to fulfill personal obligations, contributing to a counterproductive work environment. For instance, some transit operators stated that they and their peers often use sick leave because they cannot receive approval to use vacation one day at a time. They also cited the need to plan their lives and attend important life events, such as a child's graduation, even if it meant not being accountable to their duty at work.

Transit operators are required to request days off at least 96 hours in advance but may not receive notice of approval or denial until two days or less before the planned time off.

The labor agreement between SFMTA and the transit operators' union[27] officially allows transit operators to take three days off per year to meet personal needs. Requests must be made at least 96 hours in advance, but the agreement does not specify a deadline by which SFMTA must approve or deny the requests. Many transit operators stated that they do not find out whether a request has been approved or denied until 24 hours or less before the planned time off. As a result, transit operators find it difficult to plan for personal obligations.

Other SFMTA employees believe that more flexible work arrangements could enhance accountability and commitment.

SFMTA administrative and professional employees discussed their desire for more flexible work schedules and alternative working arrangements, such as teleworking. Allowing employees more flexibility in their work schedules enables them to better balance professional and personal obligations. This should create more work-life balance, which enhances accountability and commitment, ultimately having a positive impact on organizational culture in some circumstances.

Accountability can be improved through short- and long-term actions.

The focus groups generated thoughtful ideas to make SFMTA's workplace more inviting and to increase accountability throughout the agency. Some of these ideas can be achieved in the short-term, while other suggestions may be realized through longer-term actions:

Short-term actions:

- Remind staff of SFMTA's health and wellness programs and provide opportunities to participate.
- Ensure the cleanliness of all work spaces, whether they are in an office or a transit vehicle.
- Provide employees, particularly transit operators, adequate break and recovery time.

Long-term actions:

- Develop a clear policy on attendance and absences that meets the needs of the department and its staff.
- Increase management accountability and transparency with management training.

[27] The agreement is with the Transport Workers Union, Local 250-A, and expires on June 30, 2017.

- Give staff more opportunities to be cross-trained and to promote from within.

SFMTA does not conduct formal managerial training to ensure that managers consistently apply SFMTA's leadership commitments and core values throughout the agency.

SFMTA lacks a formal, institutionalized approach to train its managers to develop and enhance the core competencies related to its leadership commitments and core values, such as professional respect, constructive and open communication, cross-organizational teamwork, authenticity, inclusiveness, and accountability, to name a few. To facilitate strengthening employees' organizational commitment and accountability, SFMTA must include other elements of compassionate leadership as part of its managers' core competencies (for example, a high level of emotional intelligence).

SFMTA reported that:

- It offers on-the-job training, professional/leadership development, and one training session required by the Department of Human Resources. It contracts with the Department of Human Resources to train personnel in three job classifications used in the Transit Division on management and leadership skills.[28]

- SFMTA plans to hire two learning and development managers to allow the agency to implement a management and leadership training program.

Lack of consistent training of managers does not promote adherence to SFMTA's leadership commitments.

Consistent division-wide training for managers would enhance their ability to lead with compassion and increase adherence to SFMTA's leadership commitments and core values. Federal government reports indicate a strong link between good supervisory skills and higher levels of employee engagement. Sound supervisory skills include treating employees with respect, valuing their opinions, and fostering an environment of communication and collaboration through compassionate leadership. For SFMTA's leadership commitments to be embodied throughout the organization, managers must receive continuous training and development.

[28] In fiscal year 2013-14, 267 personnel were employed in these classifications.

Accountability can be promoted by recognizing staff achievements and accomplishments.

Some focus group participants believe that SFMTA leadership should consider linking employees' performance to a rewards program to increase productivity, job satisfaction, and commitment. Most SFMTA staff concur that being accountable should be recognized or rewarded in some manner, and perhaps all stakeholders can work together to find a suitable solution to show appreciation for a job well done. For example, focus groups suggested:

- Reviving SFMTA's public information campaign, which featured photos of transit operators and associated comments of appreciation posted on transit vehicles.

- SFMTA management should recognize the value employees bring to the organization.

Exhibit 25 presents some of the ideas that focus group participants presented to incentivize accountability related to attendance.

EXHIBIT 25 Focus Group Participants Suggested Strategies That Could Improve Personal Accountability and Reduce Absenteeism

Focus Group	Comment*
Transit Operators – Kirkland	• Everyone should be appreciated and recognized.
Transit Superintendents	• Educate employees in the beginning when they first get here. We need a strong onboarding process. • We need to better educate our staff on available resources and what the programs are.
Transit Operators – Potrero	• Reward good attendance. • Give stars or acknowledgement for not taking sick days, like having an award or merit system for being here a certain number of days out of the year. • [We need] clear-cut policy. We need to understand the policy and be consistent.
Transit Operators – Green	• Rest, break, lunch, restroom breaks are needed. Don't have time to eat. • We need to ensure our operators get the breaks they need; better scheduling, especially for rail; delays happen every day. • Cleanliness is an issue. Clean inside of cab.
Transit Operators – Flynn	• Implement way to keep buses clean. Shield-like to keep germs away, like the light rail vehicles.
Bus & Rail Maintenance	• We need to figure out a way to incentivize people to come to work and reward those who come to work regularly.
Administrative & Professional Staff	• We have so few window spaces; would be nice if window spaces reserved for communal space to keep happy, productive staff and give people exposure to [natural] light. • Workstations should be adapted a bit to be more flexible – maybe I want a standing desk just because I want to stand, not necessarily because I have lumbar issues. • Ergonomics – work spaces that facilitate better health and morale. • Team-building activities that help the organization and are fun.
Administrative & Professional Managers	• I think absence as a problem goes hand in hand with performance management as a problem; if we don't manage performance, absences tend to mount and become more problematic. • Flexibility to allow participation in wellness activities.

*Note: Some comments have been paraphrased for brevity.

Source: Comments recorded during focus groups conducted by CSA.

GAO reports that the level of employee engagement is linked to employees feeling valued.

In a 2015 report on employee engagement in the federal workforce, GAO notes that what matters most in improving the level of employee engagement is demonstrating that employees are valued, meaning that there is "an authentic focus on their performance, career development, and inclusion and involvement in decisions

affecting their work."[29] A good work-life balance, an inclusive work environment, and employee involvement in decisions that affect them are some of the strongest drivers of employee engagement.

Government agencies have employed various strategies in recent years to address work-life balance and work environment issues, including:

- Revising telework policies and improving telework infrastructure to make teleworking more effective.[30]
- Establishing an agency-wide diversity council.[31]
- Creating an employee-driven workforce improvement team.[32]
- Creating a corporate culture office with culture ambassadors.[33]

Each of these strategies was reported to have improved work-life balance and employee feelings of involvement, resulting in increased employee engagement over time.

[29] GAO, *Federal Workforce: Additional Analysis and Sharing of Promising Practices Could Improve Employee Engagement and Performance*, July 2015, p. 13.

[30] Ibid., p.16. The U.S. Department of Education, as part of its *EngagEd* initiative, reported that it revised its telework policies and trained managers and employees on the new policies and improved infrastructure aimed at making telework as effective as time spent in the office.

[31] Ibid., p.16. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reported that it established an agency-wide Diversity Council to develop comprehensive strategies to promote understanding and opportunity throughout the FTC. The Diversity Council included representatives from each agency division and from all levels with a goal of engaging employees and supervisors across the agency, making recommendations for improving diversity and fostering professional development.

[32] Ibid., p.16. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of General Counsel (OGC) reported that it has a permanent employee-driven Workforce Improvement Team that has helped management improve employee onboarding and introduced additional training and professional development opportunities. According to OGC officials, the Workforce Improvement Team has created feelings of stronger ownership, engagement, and influence in decision-making.

[33] Center for State and Local Government Excellence, *Workforce of Tomorrow*, Washington, DC, December 2015, p.11. The City of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, reported that it created a corporate culture office with 400 volunteer culture ambassadors from the city's workforce, a culture advisory group, and an annual staff event, all designed to connect employees to the city's mission and create an environment in which employees know they are valued resources and are engaged in decision making.

Recommendations

To improve its overall organizational culture of respect, collaboration, and accountability, which will increase employee engagement and allow for better management of employee absenteeism, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:

1. Establish a managerial training policy that is consistent with developing a core competency in compassionate leadership skills. This will provide tools to foster a respectful, collaborative, and accountable organizational culture. At a minimum:

    a. Collaborate with the Department of Human Resources to develop and implement a sustainable and consistent leadership development program that will enhance leadership's soft skills and emotional intelligence, including implementing continuous leadership trainings on:

        i. Engaging, empowering, supporting, and motivating staff.
        ii. Authentic, open, and respectful communication and interactions.
        iii. Increasing trust through team-building.
        iv. Coaching and giving feedback.
        v. Conflict resolution and management.
        vi. Interpersonal skills.
        vii. Setting performance goals and expectations.
        viii. Creating a safe work environment.
        ix. Managing employee work/life balance.

    b. Cross-train staff to improve workload coordination and ensure knowledge transfer.

    c. Continuously train and inform employees about the agency's leave and attendance policies, procedures, and guidelines.

2. Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that considers multiple avenues to connect with employees, including in-person and online, and that allows for two-way communication.

3. Seek external expertise or hire an employee dedicated to assessing, enhancing, and further implementing the agency's workforce engagement

strategy to improve professional respect, communication, and accountability throughout the organization. To do so:

a. Revise the agency's employee satisfaction survey to collect data in new areas, such as work-life balance.

b. Develop a strategy to increase response rates to the employee satisfaction survey, especially among transit operators.

c. Regularly track and analyze data on absences, engagement, job satisfaction, and workforce demographics to identify and report on patterns and make data-driven decisions.

d. Strengthen and formalize the employee recognition and reward program throughout the department to acknowledge and recognize employee achievements and accomplishments.

e. Report to the Board of Directors annually on the results of employee engagement efforts.

4. Ensure that the agency provides a work environment that promotes employee health, work-life balance, and productivity.

5. During upcoming labor negotiations or through existing joint labor-management committees, consider options to create a meaningful way for employees to be involved in making decisions that affect their work environment.

CHAPTER 2 – SFMTA Needs to Improve the Return to Work Process to Effectively Manage and Monitor Absences

Summary

SFMTA needs to develop adequate policies and procedures for absence management and consistently apply them throughout the department. Ensuring that the policies and procedures are communicated to staff at all levels of the department will aid in this effort. Further, SFMTA lacks a centralized process to effectively manage and monitor long-term absences. Last, the processes to manage and monitor absences that do exist for some job classifications need improvement.

Finding 2.1

SFMTA's policies and procedures for absence management are inadequate.

SFMTA does not have policies or agency-wide procedures to manage absences.

SFMTA does not have adequate policies for managing absences. Further, SFTMA does not have agency-wide procedures to uniformly and consistently manage absences across its divisions. According to personnel from various divisions, SFMTA lacks effective absence management policies and procedures. Without these, supervisors have no guidance to address the long-term leaves of their staff. According to some SFMTA staff interviewed, it has not been made clear to managers or supervisors when or how to pursue progressive discipline or other actions in cases when employees have taken excessive leave.

SFMTA risks employees being delayed in returning to work.

The factors above increase the risk that employee leaves may be handled incorrectly and that employees on leave do not return to work as soon as they should, which would result in staffing shortages for longer than necessary. The lack of adequate policies and procedures can be attributed to findings discovered during the audit and discussed in Chapter 3 of this report.

Laws, regulations, and guidelines are insufficient.

Although the Administrative Code, Chapter 12W, and Civil Service Commission Rule 420 discuss leaves of absence, these are insufficient to be SFMTA's day-to-day absence management policy and procedures.

In September 2014 the Absence Management Task Force (task force) issued absence management guidelines for the transit operator work group. According to SFMTA, the idea is to issue these guidelines to one work group at a time, starting with transit operators, and then parking control officers, and eventually all other work groups. These guidelines are intended to assist managers of these work groups in handling employee absences, including how to address patterns of absence or excessive absences. The guidelines include a toolkit, which consist of forms used for counseling, warning, and progressive discipline of employees.

Guidelines have not changed the way SFMTA handles absences.

According to SFMTA transit supervisors, the guidelines and toolkit are helpful, but they handled absences in the same way before the guidelines were issued. And although the guidelines and toolkit formalize the process, following it can be time-consuming.

Although the guidelines and toolkit may be useful to some supervisors, they are not adequate agency-wide policies and procedures for absence management. According to various SFMTA personnel, without absence management policies and procedures, supervisors must rely on Civil Service Commission Rule 420 and the Administrative Code, Chapter 12W, neither of which are policies and both of which only explain employees' rights and entitlements.

Policies and agency-wide procedures to manage absences would be a best practice.

According to GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, management should document in written policy the organization's processes, those processes' related risks of fraud and error, and internal controls designed to reduce those risks. The written policies should be sufficiently detailed to allow management to effectively monitor its controls and further define policies through day-to-day procedures. The standards also state that management should communicate to personnel the policies and procedures so that personnel can implement the control activities for their assigned responsibilities.

According to the *Top 10 Best Practices for Leave Management and Administration*, an effective absence management program must have clear and consistent processes and policies, including processes and policies

for correspondence, tracking, management, decision making, and communication. Also, training managers and supervisors is important so that they understand the process and their responsibilities and to limit organizational liability and uniformly administer the organization's leave policies.

Recommendations

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:

6. Establish departmental absence management policy.

7. Create procedures in each division of the agency to ensure that the departmental absence management policy is achieved.

8. Train managers and supervisors on the importance of the absence management policy and procedures and ensure that they understand the processes involved in absence management.

9. Clearly communicate the absence management policy and procedures to all staff.

Finding 2.2

Monitoring procedures performed by supervisors may not be uniform or consistently applied due to a lack of a centralized process for managing long-term leave.

SFMTA has no centralized process to manage and monitor long-term absences.

Although SFMTA's Return to Work unit is responsible for administering all long-term leave requests and return to work processes, it does not manage and monitor employees' leaves. According to SFMTA's Human Resources Division, the agency lacks a group dedicated to managing absences. Instead, employees' leaves are, at times, individually monitored by the employees' supervisors, but this is left to each supervisor's discretion. In some cases, employees' leaves are not monitored at all.

Because long-term leave is not managed centrally, monitoring procedures performed by supervisors may not be uniformly or consistently applied across the various divisions of SFMTA. For example, some supervisors who do monitor leaves created their own method of tracking, using Excel spreadsheets or another stand-alone process. According to SFMTA's management, there is a

lack of ownership related to absence management because different personnel handle various aspects of it. Also, SFMTA Transit Division managers do not uniformly handle employee absences; rather, processes can vary among the division's units. According to SFMTA's Labor Relations unit, there is a lack of consistency among the Transit Divisions' superintendents when addressing employee absences.

The Return to Work Unit states it would need more staff to manage absences.

According to the Return to Work unit, it does not have enough staff to fully handle both the administration of long-term leave requests and the process for employees returning to work. As a result, it has to prioritize certain tasks over others within these two processes.

The task force launched an attendance management web page.

SFMTA's Absence Management Task Force includes employees from the Human Resources, Transit, Labor Relations, Technology and Performance, and Chief of Staff divisions. In July 2015 the task force launched an Employee Attendance Resources (EAR) webpage on SFMTA's intranet. According to SFMTA, the EAR webpage is to be an "attendance one-stop shop" for all employees, but particularly for supervisors, to access.

The EAR webpage includes resources such as flowcharts of leave processes, counseling forms, attendance language in labor contracts, and general information about attendance and attendance monitoring. The webpage includes an attendance monitoring dashboard, which reports attendance and leave data in a number of ways, for supervisors to access. According to SFMTA, the data reported on the dashboard is from the PeopleSoft payroll system and is updated every two weeks.

The EAR webpage is a useful tool for staff to learn and understand relevant labor contract provisions and city rules and regulations related to attendance and for supervisors to monitor their staff's leave usage and attendance patterns. However, the webpage is not easily accessible to all SFMTA employees because some have no access to a work computer. Also, the existence of this webpage does not change the fact that the management and monitoring of employees absences is left to individual supervisors, which makes inconsistent practices more likely.

A lack of adequate centralized absence management and monitoring increases the risk that employees on leave do not return to work as soon as they should, resulting in staffing shortages for longer than necessary.

According to Safety National's *Top 10 Best Practices for Leave Management and Administration*, to effectively manage and maintain an absence management program for employees, organizations should centralize administration of the leave function so that employees have one source to go to for questions and answers.[34]

Systems with data that could help SFMTA manage absences do not interface.

In fiscal year 2013-14 there were 1,362 SFMTA employees on long-term leave and 380 approved for intermittent leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

As described in the Background section of this report, personnel, leave, and payroll data is maintained on four separate systems:

- HRDB – SFMTA's human resource database, including employee leave information
- PeopleSoft – the City's timekeeping & payroll system
- Trapeze – Scheduling, dispatching, and timekeeping system for transit operators
- Capital Projects Controls System – Project management, accounting, and timekeeping system for the Capital Programs & Construction Division

Although Trapeze and the Capital Projects Controls System interface with PeopleSoft, HRDB does not. Further, employee leave data recorded in HRDB is not readily available to supervisors, and FMLA tracking maintained by supervisors is not readily available to units of the Human Resources Division.

Because data is not readily available to all managers, supervisors, or others who handle absence management, this leads to information gaps that hinder SFMTA's management of employee absences. This point was made by a manager in SFMTA's Finance and

[34] Safety National is a leading provider of alternative risk funding products such as excess workers' compensation, deductible casualty, loss portfolio transfers, and reinsurance.

Technology Division, who stated that it is difficult to effectively manage absences due to the lack of a centralized system that houses all relevant leave information. Numerous SFMTA employees stated that there is no system to track employees on FMLA intermittent leave or the use of the leave time. This is discussed in further detail under Finding 3.1.

According to GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, management should use quality information to achieve the entity's objectives. This means that management must design a process to identify information needed to achieve the objectives and obtain relevant data from reliable internal and external sources in a timely manner based on the information identified. Further, management must process the obtained data into quality information that supports the internal control system.

The various SFMTA units that handle employee absences do not adequately communicate with one another.

In addition to SFMTA's lack of interfaced systems data, the agency's absence processes lack adequate communication among the parties involved. A Verified Transit Training (VTT)/Training unit supervisor stated that the Human Resources License & Medical unit does not always update the VTT/Training unit so it knows to expect employees who have completed the License and Medical unit step of the return to work process. Further, lack of communication causes supervisors to be unaware of where employees are in the return to work process and may cause some employees to become unaccounted for during the return to work process.

According to the *Top 10 Best Practices for Leave Management and Administration*, organizational collaboration across business units is critical for the best management of leave programs. Removing barriers between departments and among units of a department creates efficiencies.

Recommendations

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:

10. Create a centralized process for managing and monitoring all long-term leaves. The process should use dedicated staff to ensure uniformity and consistency and establish clear lines of communication across the department.

11. Ensure that the systems used for personnel, leave, and payroll data are interfaced and contain relevant data to provide timely information for agency-wide absence management.

Finding 2.3

A lack of communication between SFMTA units delays the return to work of employees in safety-sensitive jobs.

Although the return to work process for job classifications that are not safety-sensitive is adequate, the same process for safety-sensitive classifications is unnecessarily long and needs to be improved.

Safety-sensitive functions are defined by the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration,[35] both agencies of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Exhibit 26 summarizes safety-sensitive transportation-related duties according to both agencies.

[35] 49 Code of Federal Regulation, §655.4 and §382.107.

EXHIBIT 26 Safety-Sensitive Transportation Functions as Defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
• Operation of a revenue service vehicle, whether in or out of revenue service	• Waiting to be dispatched to operate a commercial motor vehicle while at employer facility unless relieved from duty
• Operation of a nonrevenue vehicle requiring a commercial driver license	• Inspecting, servicing, or repairing equipment or a commercial motor vehicle
• Controlling dispatch or movement of a revenue service vehicle	• Driving time or all other functions performed in or on a commercial motor vehicle
• Maintenance (including repairs, overhaul, and rebuilding) of a revenue service vehicle or equipment used in revenue service	• Loading or unloading a commercial motor vehicle, supervising or assisting in such loading or unloading, attending a vehicle being loaded or unloaded, remaining in readiness to operate the vehicle, or in giving or receiving receipts for shipments being loaded or unloaded
• Carrying a firearm for security purposes	• Repairing, obtaining assistance, or remaining in attendance on a disabled commercial motor vehicle

Source: Title 49 Code of Federal Regulation, §655.4 and §382.107

Employees performing safety-sensitive functions are subject to drug and alcohol testing when returning to duty from long-term leave. At SFMTA, this process is performed by the Wellness unit of the Human Resources Division.

The return to work process for employees not in safety-sensitive positions only requires that, on their expected leave end date, they:

- Report to the Return to Work unit to sign a processing form indicating that they have started the return to work process.
- Proceed to their supervisor to obtain their signature as evidence of completing the return to work process.

In contrast, the process for employees with safety-sensitive job classifications requires them to obtain clearance from the License and Medical and VTT/Training units before returning to duty.

Exhibit 27 summarizes the functions of both the License and Medical and VTT/Training units for the return to work process.

EXHIBIT 27 SFMTA's License and Medical and VTT/Training Units Ensure That Employees in Safety-Sensitive Jobs Are Current With Their Driver License and Training Upon Returning From Long-Term Leave

License and Medical	VTT/Training
• Reviews for unexpired commercial driver license without any restrictions	• Reviews for unexpired transit training certificate and up-to-date hours, depending on amount of leave
• Reviews for unexpired medical certificate	• Determines whether additional training is needed, depending on amount of leave and on type of vehicle operated

Source: SFMTA

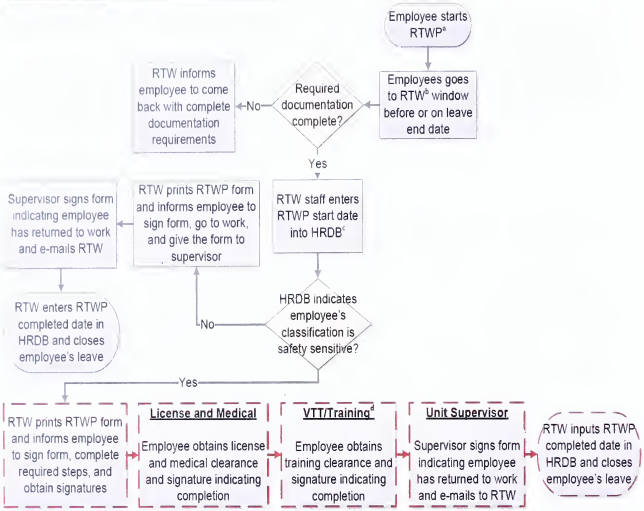
SFMTA's Human Resources groups do not communicate sufficiently, slowing the return to work process for employees in safety-sensitive jobs.

As discussed in detail below, there are often long delays between employees with safety-sensitive job classifications initiating the process with the Return to Work unit and reporting to the License and Medical and the VTT/Training units. According to SFMTA, it does not have a central tracking system. Consequently, it cannot efficiently check on an employee's status.

Because there is no central tracking system, Human Resources units must effectively communicate with each other regarding an employee's status in the process. However, that communication does not exist. Rather, this type of check requires tracing an employee's progress through the steps and confirming each with the relevant unit. As a result, the Return to Work unit maintains a list of employees who have started, but not yet completed, the return to work process. However, the list is not used to monitor or track employees through the process, primarily because, according to unit management, the Return to Work unit is short-staffed and must prioritize other tasks.

Exhibit 28 summarizes the return to work process for employees in safety-sensitive job classifications and denotes the lack of communication among and between SFMTA's Human Resources groups in the process.

EXHIBIT 28 SFMTA's Process for Employees in Safety-Sensitive Jobs Returning to Work Is Hampered by a Lack of Communication Among Units


Employee starts RTWP[a]
Employees goes to RTW[b] window before or on leave end date
Required documentation complete?
No
RTW informs employee to come back with complete documentation requirements
Yes
RTW staff enters RTWP start date into HRDB[c]
RTW prints RTWP form and informs employee to sign form, go to work, and give the form to supervisor
Supervisor signs form indicating employee has returned to work and e-mails RTW
RTW enters RTWP completed date in HRDB and closes employee's leave
HRDB indicates employee's classification is safety sensitive?
No
Yes
RTW prints RTWP form and informs employee to sign form, complete required steps, and obtain signatures
License and Medical
Employee obtains license and medical clearance and signature indicating completion
VTT/Training[d]
Employee obtains training clearance and signature indicating completion
Unit Supervisor
Supervisor signs form indicating employee has returned to work and e-mails to RTW
RTW inputs RTWP completed date in HRDB and closes employee's leave
Return to work process for employees in safety-sensitive jobs

Notes:
[a] RTWP: Return to Work Process
[b] RTW: Return to Work Unit
[c] HRDB: Human Resource Database System
[d] VTT/Training: Verification of Transit Training/Training Unit, Human Resources Division

Source: Auditor's observations and analysis of process.

88 percent of SFMTA employees take longer to return to work than the minimum expected duration, and the vast majority of them are in safety-sensitive jobs.

The audit tested how long it takes SFMTA employees to return to work.[36] According to the Return to Work unit, it should take employees performing safety-sensitive functions a minimum of 3 days to complete the return to work process, assuming there are no additional delays in the process, and 1.5 days for all other employees. Using these criteria, 89 (88 percent) of 101 tested employees

[36] On January 20, 2015, 101 SFMTA employees were recorded in HRDB as having started, but not completed, the return to work process.

had not completed the return to work process in a timely manner as of January 20, 2015. Of these 89, 69 (78 percent) are employees performing safety-sensitive functions.

Although 15 employees (15 percent) took less than 7 work days to complete the process, 20 employees (21 percent) were recorded as remaining in this process for more than 90 days.

Exhibit 29 summarizes, for each category of employee, the number of employees tested and the average number of days spent in the return to work process.

EXHIBIT 29 78 Percent of Employees Who Did Not Complete the Return to Work Process in a Timely Manner Perform Safety-Sensitive Functions

Employees	Percentage of Employees Tested	Range of Number of Days in the Process	Average Number of Days in the Process
Safety-sensitive	78%	3 - 261	71
Not safety-sensitive	22%	0 - 100	48
Total	100%	0 - 261	N/A

Source: Auditor's analysis of data from Human Resource Database System

The Return to Work unit does not always know when an employee returns to work.

SFMTA supervisors do not always effectively communicate with the Return to Work unit regarding their employees' statuses. Of the 89 tested employees in safety-sensitive jobs, 39 (44 percent) had returned to work, according to their supervisors. However, the list of employees who had started but not yet completed the return to work process incorrectly included 27 (69 percent) of these 39 employees. This may have occurred because, according to the Return to Work unit, supervisors do not always submit return to work processing forms on time, which delays the unit in documenting return to work dates in HRDB. As a result, employees who have already returned incorrectly appear on the list of those who have started but not yet completed the return process.

Employees are not monitored between the License and Medical and the VTT/Training steps. Of a sample of employees who had completed the License and Medical step, half had not appeared at the VTT/Training unit.

Human Resources staff did not effectively and consistently communicate across units of the Human Resources Division, leading to employee statuses being unknown between steps. Of the 69 employees with safety-sensitive job classifications who had been on long-term leave and had started the return to work process, the audit found that:

- 7 (10 percent) had started the return to work process but had not appeared at the License and Medical unit, which is the required next step after the Return to Work unit step.
- 7 (10 percent) were at the License and Medical unit waiting to obtain clearance.
- 54 (78 percent) had completed the License and Medical step.

This distribution of employees in the process appears reasonable. However, of the 54 employees who had completed the License and Medical step:

- 27 (50 percent) had not appeared at the VTT/Training unit, which is the required next step after completing the License and Medical unit step.
- Only 19 (35 percent) had completed the VTT/Training step, all of whom had returned to work.

Even if training is not required for employees performing safety-sensitive functions, the VTT/Training unit must sign the processing form before employees can return to their divisions. Also, although the Return to Work unit contacts the License and Medical unit once the Return to Work unit has signed the employee's processing form, according to the VTT/Training unit, it is typically not informed by the License and Medical unit that employees will be proceeding to VTT/Training.

The VTT/Training unit stated that it signs the processing form when an employee has been assigned to a training session, not when the employee has completed a training session. This practice increases the risk that employees may not attend the required training session because they already have an approved processing form. For example, this increases the risk of a driver getting behind the wheel of a bus with passengers

without any refresher training after an extended period of long-term leave.

The new electronic routing system should improve the return to work process.

When employees take longer than necessary to return to work, SFMTA has to either decrease services or incur costs to cover for absent employees. To mitigate this risk, SFMTA needs to actively monitor the return to work process. To do this, SFMTA's Human Resources unit has begun to develop an electronic routing system to track employees' dates of completion and progress between steps in the return to work process. According to SFMTA, the goal is to better capture where in the process employees are and ensure that all relevant units have access to this information. According to SFMTA, it started using this system in January 2016.

Recommendations

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:

12. Develop procedures that explicitly require units involved in the return to work process be notified when an employee is ready to begin a step for which that unit is responsible. For instance, the electronic tracking system in development should notify VTT/Training automatically when an employee completes the License and Medical step.

13. Require supervisors to sign and submit Return to Work processing forms to the Return to Work unit within a specified number of days.

14. Require the Return to Work unit to enter the information on Return to Work processing forms into the Human Resource Database System within a specified number of days.

15. Require that all units that approve Return to Work processing forms sign the form on or after the date of completion.

16. Use the new electronic routing system, upon its full implementation, to monitor employees' progress and to proactively engage employees to try to return them to work quickly.

CHAPTER 3 – More Robust FMLA Absence Management Processes, Systems, and Data Analysis Would Improve the Agency's Capacity to Manage Employee Absences

Summary

SFMTA lacks the oversight and systems to efficiently track and monitor employee absences. SFMTA does not have effective controls to ensure that employees' eligibility for and use of leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) are in accordance with FMLA requirements, increasing the risk of errors in determining FMLA leave eligibility and abuse of this leave. Also, SFMTA needs to improve its processes for administering intermittent FMLA leave and long-term leave to ensure adequacy and efficiency. Last, SFMTA only performs staffing analyses for transit operators and parking control officers, and the analyses are inadequate, resulting in inaccurate predictions that may hinder the department from efficiently and effectively meeting its goals and service needs.

Finding 3.1

SFMTA needs to track and develop a standardized process for approving FMLA leave.

SFMTA does not have a centralized system to track leave data, so must rely on manual and disjointed processes to monitor employees on leave, particularly FMLA leave. Also, SFMTA's Return to Work unit lacks consistent and standardized processes for approving and monitoring employees on intermittent FMLA leave and long-term leave.

Finding 3.1.1

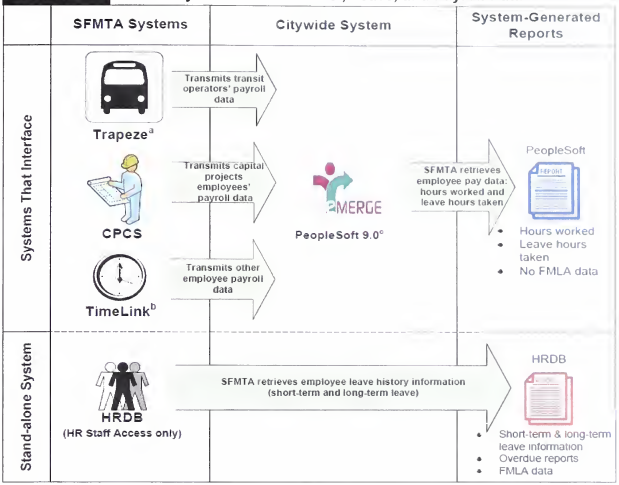
SFMTA's systems for personnel, leave, and payroll data do not interface.

SFMTA uses several systems that contain employee time, payroll, and human resources information. However, not all of the systems interface to share important information. As described in the Background section of this report, personnel, leave, and payroll data are located in the following systems:

- Capital Projects Controls System (CPCS) – SFMTA's project management, accounting, and timekeeping system for the Capital Programs & Construction Division.
- Human Resources Data Base (HRDB) – This database contains human resources and leave management and tracking information.
- PeopleSoft 9.0 – The City's human resources, timekeeping, and payroll system, maintained by the Controller's eMerge Division.
- TimeLink – SFMTA's electronic time punch card system that transmits employee work hours to PeopleSoft.
- Trapeze – SFMTA's scheduling, dispatching, and timekeeping system for transit operators.

Exhibit 30 shows the relationship between these systems and the system-generated reports that are available to managers, supervisors, and other staff tasked with managing employee absences.

EXHIBIT 30 SFMTA Systems for Personnel, Leave, and Payroll Data



Notes:

[a] Trapeze can track information on FMLA data, but that information is not transmitted to PeopleSoft 9.0.

[b] TimeLink is an electronic time clock system used to record time worked. TimeLink transmits data directly to PeopleSoft 9.0.

[c] Although the majority of SFMTA employees' work hours are logged through Trapeze, CPCS, and TimeLink and then transmitted to PeopleSoft, some SFMTA employees use a self-service portal to enter their time directly into PeopleSoft.

Source: Auditor observation of Trapeze, CPCS, HRDB and TimeLink.

The lack of a single system that contains all relevant employee leave data creates an information gap for managers and staff with absence management responsibilities.

Although the Trapeze, CPCS, and TimeLink systems transmit employees' payroll data to PeopleSoft, SFMTA's HRDB system, which contains employee leave history, does not interface with these systems. HRDB contains historical information on employee leaves. Meanwhile, PeopleSoft contains employee information on hours worked, which may affect an employee's eligibility for leave. Instead of having a single system that contains all of this information, SFMTA staff must generate separate reports and manually reconcile information to determine an employee's eligibility for leave.

At SFMTA, each employee's manager and the agency's Human Resources Division share the responsibility to review and approve the employee's leave. The existing process to verify an employees' eligibility for leave is tedious and difficult to manage department-wide, involving the reconciliation of reports from HRDB and PeopleSoft to determine eligibility. As a result, SFMTA has not always verified whether all employees on leave were in fact eligible to take the leave.

Finding 3.1.2

SFMTA does not track FMLA leave in the City's PeopleSoft payroll system.

SFMTA's tracking of FMLA leave use is deficient because the City's PeopleSoft payroll and SFMTA's HRDB systems do not meet the needs of the department.

According to SFMTA management, the agency does not track FMLA data in the City's PeopleSoft 9.0 payroll system, which is the City's official timekeeping system of record, because the system lacks the functionality to track and report FMLA leave that would meet the agency's needs. Consequently, SFMTA uses its own decentralized system, which lacks the accuracy and efficiency needed to determine FMLA eligibility and track FMLA leave use on a department-wide scale. Failure to accurately record and maintain FMLA eligibility and leave use history increases the risk of errors.

A PeopleSoft 9.2 upgrade allows city departments to track use of all employee leave, including FMLA leave, in the system.

The Controller's eMerge Division upgraded the City's PeopleSoft timekeeping and payroll system from Version 9.0 to 9.2 in May 2016. This upgrade allows all city departments to use the system to record and track all types of employee leave taken, including FMLA leave.

SFMTA's leave management data collection processes and systems do not allow the department to effectively monitor employees' leaves.

The lack of an interface between SFMTA's HRDB system and the City's payroll system of record forces the department to manage employee leaves in an inefficient manner. Some SFMTA managers and staff responsible for managing employee leaves reported that they have resorted to using spreadsheets that must be manually updated in order to keep track of employees on leave, adding additional administrative tasks to their workloads.

According to the GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, management must design the entity's information system to obtain and process information to meet each operational process's information requirements and to respond to the entity's

objectives and risks. In contrast, SFMTA has a disjointed process for managing leaves, due in part to the limitations of the agency's HRDB system and functional limitations of the City's PeopleSoft timekeeping system.

Recommendations

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:

17. Track leave granted under the Family and Medical Leave Act using FMLA functionality in the City's PeopleSoft payroll system.

18. Work with the Office of the Controller's eMerge Division to identify functional and reporting requirements for the PeopleSoft 9.2 upgrade so that the Family and Medical Leave Act leave tracking and reporting functions meet the agency's needs.

19. Work with the Office of the Controller's eMerge Division to implement the PeopleSoft Absence Management module to help the agency better manage employees' short- and long-term absences.

20. Ensure that the leave management and tracking information maintained in the Human Resource Database System is transferred into the PeopleSoft system to keep an accurate historical record of employee leaves in one location.

Finding 3.1.3

Eight transit operators took 628 hours of sick leave or vacation under FMLA although they were ineligible.

Eight transit operators received $18,283 of sick or vacation pay under FMLA for which they were deemed ineligible.

Eight SFMTA transit operators who were denied FMLA eligibility in HRDB were able to take a total of 628 hours of sick leave or vacation under FMLA, amounting to $18,283 in pay, through the Trapeze system. Although the employees were paid using their accrued sick or vacation hours, their supervisors may not have approved the leave had they been aware that the employees were ineligible for FMLA. Also, Trapeze, which provides PeopleSoft with payable hours, includes hours entered as FMLA hours but has no process to check whether the person entering those hours is eligible for FMLA and does not interface with HRDB, which contains those determinations.

FMLA functionality in PeopleSoft 9.0 did not meet SFMTA's needs for efficient tracking and monitoring of FMLA usage.

Although FMLA leave hours are tracked in Trapeze, this information is not transmitted to PeopleSoft. This is because, as stated above, PeopleSoft's functionality in this area did not meet the agency's needs and, therefore, was not being used by SFMTA before Version 9.0 was replaced. As a result, the coded hours of FMLA leave recorded in Trapeze were only transmitted to PeopleSoft in terms of the type of leave used, such as sick or vacation leave pay, with no indication of whether or not they were FMLA-related. Although the eMerge Division acknowledged that the FMLA functionality in Version 9.0 of PeopleSoft was not optimal, the software did allow assignment of hours as FMLA.

Of 48 transit operators whose requests for intermittent FMLA leave in fiscal year 2013-14 were denied by the Return to Work unit, 16 (33 percent) were recorded in Trapeze as having taken FMLA leave during the period the audit tested. Of these 16 transit operators, 8 (50 percent) were recorded as having taken FMLA leave in Trapeze during the same periods in which they were denied, which resulted in 628 hours recorded in Trapeze for FMLA-related paid sick leave and vacation. This translates to 760 hours of FMLA leave in PeopleSoft, which includes hours taken for unpaid leave. In total, SFMTA paid $18,283 to these 8 transit operators for accrued sick leave and vacation under FMLA that they were not permitted to take.

Ultimately, the paid leave that employees take due to circumstances that do not qualify under FMLA will not count against their FMLA leave entitlement. Regardless, without FMLA leave tracking functionality in PeopleSoft, there is no simple and centralized way for SFMTA's Human Resources Division or supervisors to review and verify employees' eligibility for FMLA leave or to monitor and track use of FMLA leave.

Recommendation

21. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should ensure that only eligible employees who have been approved for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act be allowed to take sick leave or vacation covered by FMLA.

Finding 3.1.4

SFMTA did not comply with eligibility determination and notice requirements for intermittent FMLA leave.

One ineligible employee was granted intermittent FMLA leave.

Of a sample of 22 employees who SFMTA approved to take intermittent FMLA leave between July 1, 2013, and December 31, 2014, 1 (5 percent), a parking control officer, was found to be ineligible for this leave. Further, SFMTA did not consistently meet FMLA requirements for timely notification of employees regarding its eligibility determination.

To be eligible for FMLA leave,[37] an employee must have:

- Been employed for at least 12 months.[38]
- Worked 1,250 hours or more during the 12 months of service.
- Not had a break in service of seven years or more.

Contrary to the eligibility requirements above, the ineligible parking control officer had only worked 156—not 1,250—hours in the 12 months before the requested leave start date.[39] In February 2015 the Return to Work unit confirmed that it would correct this error and notify all necessary parties (the employee, the employee's supervisor, and the Employee & Labor Relations unit).

Biweekly meetings focus only on transit operators.

Although units of the Human Resources Division meet biweekly with transit superintendents to discuss employees on long-term or intermittent leave, workers' compensation leave, and leave by employees requiring reasonable accommodation, the focus is primarily on transit operators. Although nearly half of the department's employees are transit operators, SFMTA does not conduct such meetings with any other large groups of employees.

According to management of the Parking Enforcement section, similar meetings used to occur regularly among Human Resources units and Parking Enforcement management to discuss parking control officers on long-term leave and workers' compensation, but these meetings no longer occur.

[37] Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), §825.110

[38] The 12 months an employee must have been employed need not be consecutive months.

[39] Excluding 72 legal holiday hours in the same period, the employee was only in attendance for 84 hours.

Errors such as the one described in this finding may partly result from a lack of certainty among supervisors about their role compared to that of the Return to Work unit in verifying employee eligibility and approving leave requests. This is because, as discussed in Chapter 2, SFMTA does not have clear policies and procedures that dictate whose responsibility it is to manage leave. The Return to Work unit does not believe it should be solely responsible for ensuring that all employees are eligible for FMLA leave, while some supervisors believe that the Return to Work unit—or SFMTA's Human Resources Division as a whole—should handle approvals for all long-term leave and intermittent FMLA leave requests.

SFMTA does not review eligibility for every FMLA leave request.

According to the Return to Work unit, because the process is time-consuming and cumbersome due to the lack of centralized data, it does not review eligibility for every employee who requests FMLA leave and may approve such requests without this review. To do so would require reviewing employee data in multiple systems to verify the number of years of service and hours worked and determining how many FMLA leave hours the employee has already taken. Further, the Return to Work unit does not have access to all the systems holding the data needed to verify eligibility.

These factors also affect the Return to Work unit's process for approving extensions of intermittent FMLA leave. Of 22 employees on this type of leave tested, 8 (36 percent) had approved extensions. According to FMLA regulations,[40] only the amount of leave actually taken may be counted toward the employee's leave entitlement.

During the audit, although PeopleSoft Version 9.0 tracked leave hours and had the functionality to code hours as FMLA, it did not specifically assign it as sick leave or vacation covered by FMLA. As stated in Finding 3.1.2, according to the Controller's eMerge Division, the new version of PeopleSoft, Version 9.2, has a more robust absence management module that allows for FMLA leave tracking and reporting.

[40] CFR, §825.205(b).

SFMTA did not comply with FMLA eligibility notice requirements.

Contrary to FMLA requirements,[41] SFMTA did not notify the employee of the employee's eligibility within five business days of receipt of the request for 6 (27 percent) of 22 employees tested. According to the Return to Work unit, the reason for the delay was either because the employees had to resubmit their leave request documentation or because the Return to Work unit did not enter the request into HRDB and process the request until one or more days after receipt.

Recommendations

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:

22. Comply with Family and Medical Leave Act eligibility requirements. These include ensuring that employees have:
    a. Been employed for at least 12 months.
    b. Worked 1,250 hours or more during the 12 months of service.
    c. Not had a break in service of seven years or more.

23. Ensure that supervisors understand their roles in approving and monitoring an employee's leave and effectively communicate with units of the Human Resources Division regarding employee leave status.

Finding 3.1.5

SFMTA needs to improve its processes for administering intermittent FMLA leave and long-term leave.

Although the Return to Work unit's processes for receiving requests and administering the leave processes for both employees on intermittent FMLA and long-term leave are generally adequate, some controls can be improved to ensure adequacy and efficiency. For both processes, the Return to Work unit staff does not enter employee leave information in its leave management database, Human Resource Database Management System, accurately, consistently, or in a timely manner. Also, staff did not always ensure that all forms had the correct dates recorded and the necessary signatures. Improving these controls will ensure that the Return to Work unit administers intermittent FMLA and

[41] CFR, §825.300(b).

long-term leave effectively and efficiently and will improve the timeliness of returning employees to work.

Intermittent FMLA leave:

Some internal controls over processing requests for intermittent FMLA leave need improvement.

For intermittent FMLA, the Return to Work unit has several internal control weaknesses in how it reviews and records leave requests. The evidence of these weaknesses include:

- Leave request forms lacking required signatures of Human Resources Division staff.
- Receipt dates recorded on the leave request form did not match actual receipt dates.
- Inconsistent recording of leave data.

Exhibit 31 summarizes the problems the audit found in SFMTA's process for approving and recording intermittent FMLA leave.

EXHIBIT 31 More Than Half of a Sample of Requests for Intermittent FMLA Leave Showed Problems in Approval and Management

Problem	Number of Employees	Percentage of Sample
Leave request form lacks signature of Human Resources	22	100%
Receipt dates recorded on leave request form did not match actual receipt dates	13	59%
Inconsistent recording of leave data in HRDB	12	55%

Source: Auditor's analysis of a random sample of records for 22 employees approved for intermittent FMLA leave during July 1, 2013, through December 31, 2014. Sample was selected from population of 782 employees

Human Resources did not sign any of the tested leave request forms to indicate its approval.

All 22 employee files tested had leave request forms that lacked the required approval signature of a Human Resources Division officer. Although an employee in the Return to Work unit signed the eligibility notice sent to all employees who requested intermittent FMLA leave, the leave request must also be signed by a member of the Human Resources Division, as is done for long-term leave requests. According to the Return to Work unit, it only had two personnel analysts at the time and neither of them had the authority to sign the Human Resources approval section of the leave request form until October 2014. The Return to Work unit manager stated that this authorization would be exercised for the processing of all future requests for intermittent FMLA leave as proof of receipt, review, and approval.

Receipt dates on leave request forms were inconsistent.

Of the 22 employee files tested, 13 (59 percent) had leave request forms that had been submitted to the Return to Work unit by e-mail, and in all 13 instances the Return to Work unit accurately recorded the e-mail date as the receipt date directly in HRDB but did not indicate so on the forms. For 8 (89 percent) of the remaining 9 employees with leave request forms submitted in hard copy, the Return to Work unit did not accurately enter the date stamped on the receipt into HRDB.

HRDB contains inconsistent leave information.

According to the Return to Work unit, at times it may need to correct leave start or end dates because the dates submitted by the employee exceed 12 months. However, it does not ensure that the corrected dates are consistently written on all leave documentation and in HRDB. The audit found inconsistent leave start or end dates in 12 (55 percent) of 22 employee files tested.

Long-term leave:

Several internal controls over processing long-term leave requests need improvement.

SFMTA's Return to Work process for long-term leave is generally adequate and employees are returning to work from leave as expected. SFMTA management expects the average return to work time to be one to one-and-a-half days for non-transit employees and two to five days for transit operators. The sample tested showed that both group's results are within SFMTA management's expected timeframe, with an average of 1.5 days for non-transit employees and 4.0 days for transit operators. However, SFMTA does not always properly document employees' return to work.

Exhibit 32 summarizes the deficiencies noted in the processing of long-term leaves.

EXHIBIT 32 Some Long-Term Leave Forms Are Undated, Unsigned, or Missing

Process	Deficiency	Frequency[a] Number of Instances	Frequency[a] Percentage[b]
Request for Leave Process	Request for Leave form received is not date-stamped	39	59%
	Request for Leave form is missing Human Resources officer's signature to indicate review and corresponding date	11	17%
	Request for Leave form is not in employee file	6	9%
	Request for Leave form is missing signature of employee's supervisor	1	2%
	Request for Leave form is missing date approving physician signed	1	2%
	Separation Report[c] is not signed by Human Resources officer to indicate review	8	12%
	Separation Report is missing from employee file	6	9%
Two-week letter	Two-week notification letter was either sent late to employee or not sent at all	26	39%

Process	Deficiency	Frequency[d] Number of Instances	Frequency[d] Percentage[b]
Return to Work Process	Return to Work Processing form is missing from employee file	3	9%
	Return to Work Processing form is missing signature of employee's supervisor	1	3%
	Return to Work Processing form does not indicate employee's return to work date	1	3%

Notes:
[a] Audit tested a sample of 66 leave request instances from 42 employees. The sample included the employee's initial leave request and, if applicable, the employee's most recent leave extension request.
[b] The percentages do not sum to 100 percent because the figures are based on the occurrence of each finding in the sample.
[c] Separation reports must be completed for employees who meet any of the following conditions: leave or suspension over (term leave), reassignment, resignation, layoff, or termination.
[d] Of the 66 instances tested, 33 leave requests were instances where the employee returned to work.

Source: Auditor's analysis of a sample of 66 instances of employees on long-term leave during July 1, 2013, through December 24, 2014.

Missing dates, signatures and forms result in untimely processing of leave requests and incomplete documented reviews.

The lack of a date stamp to ensure adequate tracking and filing of paperwork may result in the misplacement, loss, or untimely processing of leave requests. The lack of a signature to indicate review presents a risk that an employee may have taken leave without eligibility for it having been verified. The missing forms in the employee's file result in incomplete documentation of an

employee's leave. Improving these controls will reduce the risk of errors and staff hours to fix these errors, as well as the risk of disciplinary action taken against employees who may have taken leave that was not approved.

Because SFMTA did not send some two-week notification letters and sent others late, some employees returned to work later than scheduled.

These control weaknesses carry a risk that SFMTA may not administer its long-term leave effectively and efficiently. For instance, SFMTA management states that the department prioritized other essential activities ahead of issuing timely advance notifications to employees returning to work after a long-term leave. However, 7 of 16 employees who did not receive advance notification returned to work *after* their scheduled leave end date. Improving these controls will reduce the risk of errors and staff hours to fix errors, as well as improve the timeliness of returning employees to work.

Recommendations

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:

24. Document its Human Resources Division's Return to Work processes and ensure that they are followed consistently. Written procedures should include those that state that:

    a. Designated personnel analysts in the Return to Work Unit are authorized to sign the Human Resources approval section of leave request forms.

    b. Leave information, including form receipt dates and leave duration dates, is to be indicated on all documentation and in the Human Resource Database Management System.

    c. Leave forms should be dated, signed and properly retained.

25. Enter employee leave information in the Human Resource Database Management System accurately and in a timely manner and update the information, such as leave start and end dates, in a timely manner.

Finding 3.2

SFMTA's staffing analysis is inadequate to determine the department's staffing needs.

SFMTA performs a generally adequate staffing analysis for its transit operators and reports it is developing an analysis for its parking enforcement officers, but states it has not analyzed the staffing of any other job classifications. The analyses of transit operators and parking enforcement officers cover only a little more than half (54 percent) of SFMTA's budgeted positions. Without adequate staffing analysis, SFMTA cannot accurately predict the number of positions needed to efficiently and effectively meet departmental goals and service needs.

The proportion of departmental positions covered by SFMTA's existing and in-progress analyses is shown in Exhibit 33.

EXHIBIT 33 SFMTA's Staffing Analyses Cover Only 54 Percent of Its Total Budgeted Positions for Fiscal Year 2014-15

Job Class Title	Budgeted Positions	Percent of all SFMTA Budgeted Positions
Transit Operator	2,364	47%
Parking Control Officer*	374	7%
SFMTA Total Staff	5,056	54%

*Note: For purpose of this exhibit, includes both parking control officers and senior parking control officers.

Source: Auditor's analysis of staffing analyses and SFMTA adopted operating budget.

A 2013 audit found that SFMTA's transit operator staffing analysis does not use historical data or consider cable car, street car, or light rail transit operators.

A staffing analysis takes into account the workload, or work that must be completed, and the time workers are available to do the work. SFMTA's Transit Division appropriately based the workload component of its transit operator staffing analysis on the current transit schedule and also considered planned expansions of service. However, it fell short on considering time operators are available to work. It accurately predicted the impact on active bus drivers of hiring, training, and transfers to other transit divisions, but, according to a 2013 audit by CSA, the analysis does not accurately reflect the time operators are unavailable due to leave. Furthermore, it addresses only active bus drivers, thereby excluding inactive bus drivers and cable car,

street car, and light rail vehicle operators.[42]

The analysis uses a non-data driven relief factor[43] to estimate the number of transit operators needed, which may be too low. The 2013 audit found SFMTA's transit operator relief factor to be low: 20 percent instead of the audited 27 percent, based on historical data. SFMTA stated that it took deliberate measures in 2014 to reduce short- and long-term leave. Consequently, using historical data would not reflect any progress achieved with these measures. SFMTA also stated that its analysis focuses on active bus drivers because they constitute the largest pool of transit operators.[44]

SFMTA's staffing levels for parking control officers are not data-driven, but it is collecting data to develop a staffing analysis.

Although SFMTA's Parking Enforcement section reported that it was developing tools for calculating staffing needs and enhancing deployment strategies for its parking enforcement officers, its staffing levels are not data-driven. During the audit period SFMTA did not determine the Parking Enforcement section's workload with parking data. Rather, the section assigned parking enforcement officers to geographically determined enforcement areas called beats. However, CSA's 2012 audit found that the beat maps were outdated and that beats were not determined based on parking or citation data or time required to adequately enforce parking restrictions.

The Parking Enforcement section stated in December 2014 that it was collecting these data and working with a contractor to develop tools that will allow the section to analyze parking and citation data to create data-driven beats and more effectively determine staffing needs. However, the section reported that the process would take another year or two to fully implement.

[42] CSA, *San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency: The Agency Must Improve Staffing Planning and Training to Meet Its Need for Transit Operators*, September 10, 2013. An inactive bus driver is one that is on long-term leave or otherwise cannot drive a bus.

[43] A relief factor indicates how many employees it takes to fill a single position for a single shift, taking into account training days, planned leave, absenteeism, and other types of leave.

[44] Transit operator new hires are first trained as bus drivers. SFMTA staffs other units of the Transit Division by transferring operators from bus units.

The negative impacts of inaccurate staffing can be significant.

Without adequate staffing analysis, SFMTA cannot accurately predict the number of positions needed to efficiently and effectively meet service needs. For example, inappropriate staffing in transit operator and parking enforcement officer positions can lead to:

- Canceled transit runs, resulting in longer wait times and more crowded vehicles for public transit users.
- Increased overtime costs from staff voluntarily working additional hours to cover a workload that requires more positions than are staffed.[45]
- Insufficient enforcement of parking laws and a potential decline in parking fee and citation revenue.

Recommendations

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:

26. Use data-driven staffing analyses to inform its decisions for budgeting positions throughout the agency.

27. Determine whether the benefits of incorporating the impact of hiring, training, transfers, and shortages at the Transit Division units for cable car, street car, and light rail into transit operator staffing calculations would exceed the ongoing costs to perform the calculations.

[45] CSA's 2013 audit of transit operator staffing found a yearly average of 12,878 runs were canceled due to a lack of available operators over three years and the overtime paid to operators who had to work to compensate for unavailable operators for six-month period was $4.7 million, or 6 percent of total transit operator pay.

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The audit objectives required CSA to assess the effectiveness of SFMTA's policies, procedures, and oversight, and to determine strategies for managing employee absences. As part of CSA's procedures to address this objective, CSA facilitated focus groups involving SFMTA staff from several divisions to gather employees' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions regarding absenteeism, its various causes, and possible solutions to help manage staff absences.

CSA conducted 12 focus group sessions in April through June 2015. Various divisions, job classifications, and organizational levels, from staff to mid-level management, were represented. For each focus group, CSA solicited volunteers and randomly and judgmentally selected participants from the volunteer pool. Each focus group session lasted approximately one-and-a-half hours, which included time at the end for participants to complete a written survey questionnaire, which covers the same topics discussed during the session. The survey results are another form of audit evidence for the sessions, as the survey responses were recorded by the participants.

A total of 116 SFMTA employees participated in the 12 focus group sessions and 132 SFMTA employees, from 26 classifications, completed the survey. For detailed results of the discussions and survey, see appendices B and C, respectively. The table below shows the focus group sessions and number of participants per group and describes the job classifications and divisions covered in each session.

Focus Group	Number of Participants	Number of Completed Survey Questionnaires	Division (Unit)	Classifications Included
Transit Operators – Potrero	9	9	• Transit (Transit Management)	• Transit Operator
Transit Operators – Flynn	9	9		
Transit Operators – Kirkland	20	20		
Transit Operators – Presidio	6	6		
Transit Operators – Green	8	8		
Transit Operators – Cable Car*	-	7		
Transit Staff – Cable Car	-	2	• Transit (Transit Management)	• Benefits Technician • Secretary II
Bus & Rail Maintenance	5	12	• Transit (Bus Maintenance and Rail Maintenance)	• Automotive Service Worker • Automotive Mechanic • Car and Auto Painter • Electrical Transit System Mechanic • Maintenance Controller • Maintenance Machinist • Secretary II • Wire Rope Cable Maintenance Mechanic
Parking Enforcement Officers -	18	18	• Sustainable Streets • (Security, Investigations & Enforcement – Parking Enforcement)	• Parking Control Officer Senior Parking Control Officer
Administrative & Professional Staff – Session 1	9	9	• Communications and Marketing • Finance & Information Technology • Sustainable Streets	• Executive Secretary I • IS Engineer – Principal • Principal Administrative Analyst
Administrative & Professional Staff – Session 2	6	6	• System Safety • Taxi and Accessible Services	• Public Relations Officer • Transportation Safety Specialist • Transportation Planner III/IV
Transit Superintendents	6	6	• Transit (Transit Management)	• Manager II/IV
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	10	10	• Chief of Staff • Communications and Marketing • Finance & Information Technology • Human Resources • Sustainable Streets	• Manager III, IV, V, VII
Total	**116**	**132**		

*Note: No participants volunteered for a focus group at the Transit Division's Cable Car unit, so CSA visited the unit and administered survey questionnaires to staff on hand. Sixteen survey questionnaires were completed there: seven by transit operators, seven by maintenance staff, and two by transit staff.

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION RESULTS

CAUSES[1]	Potrero	Flynn	Kirkland	Presidio	Green	Woods	Maintenance	Enforcement	Transit Superint	Admin Staff[2]	Mid-level Managers	Total
Health problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11
Attend to family needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Stressed/fatigued & need a break	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	10
Personal matters				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Commute delays/issues			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Take vacation	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Unable to get one-day vacation	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			5
Burning time						✓			✓	✓	✓	4
Never been absent	✓		✓	✓		✓						4
Other reasons		✓							✓	✓	✓	4
Workplace dissatisfaction; low morale & motivation	✓	✓						✓		✓		4
Unexpected emergencies							✓			✓		2
Workplace is dirty	✓	✓										2
TOTAL	8	7	6	5	6	6	5	7	8	10	8	

Notes:
1) Audit team created these categories and assigned responses to each.
2) Audit team conducted 12 focus group sessions, including 2 for administrative and professional staff, the results of which are combined here.

The table below contains comments made during the focus group discussion on causes of employee absences and categorized in the context of causes. Comments have been grouped according to auditor-determined categories for clarity and exact duplicates were removed.

Causes - What are some causes of employee absences?
1 Are there any other reasons why staff are absent from work in your division?
2 Are there any other reasons why you might be absent from work?
Health problems
• Sick/flu • Transfer of illness through steering wheel; work w/ public • Back hurts • Allergies • Chronic illness/pain • Can't use restroom when you want to • Driving injuries (hurt shoulder while driving, but not considered work-related injury) – push you to come back full-time • Transfer of illness from driver to driver (and to passengers) • Sick: self & child • Gout • Hypertension • Physical therapy (because seat blew up & I had operation) • Personal health & safety • Injury • Sore • FMLA • High blood pressure • Diabetes • Doctor's appointment • Coworker gave me the flu • Surgery • Assaulted by public • Recent injuries • Maternity
Attend to family needs
• Family problems • Care for my child/family • Death of family members • Personal/family emergencies • Pick up kids • Elder care • Child care • Family illness • Sick elder relative • Spouse travel • Personal/family issues & commitments • FMLA - Take care of family member • Home problems

- Daycare issues; school closure
- Assisting my wife (disabled)
- Birthdays, graduation, etc.
- Family obligations (sick grandparents or children)
- School meetings
- Family visits
- Sick kids/parents
- Take family member to medical appointment
- Parent's medical appointments

Stressed/fatigued & need a break

- Needed a break
- Got home late the night before; too tired
- Work place stresses
- Stress/tired
- Too tired
- Not wanting to come to work
- Added stress when bus riders do not pay fares and I try not to cause conflict with the bus riders
- Highest: stress, too tired, family, not being permitted to take one day vacation
- Too much work
- Here too long in a day
- To clear mind - helps keep reaction time good
- Fatigue
- Some coworkers just do not feel like coming in to work; they know this work is coming to them and they don't want to deal with it; they have a lot of sick time; they also may not have enough work to do
- In Safety, "sick" is physical or psychological - emotional/mental health
- Emotional/mental health - I need a half day or a day to decompress because the work is just getting to me
- My coworkers do night meetings so they "trade time" / We do this too since we have to do inspections at night (not treated as absence) - Long work hours one day and take time off next day
- Not feeling that I could effectively do my job & maintain my well-being and mental health
- Overwhelmed with personal issues at home
- Job stress
- Health & safety; people's lives in your hands
- Needed time off

Personal matters

- Urgent appointment
- Had something to do (fun, business)
- Appointment that could not be cancelled
- Family emergency
- Personal business
- Jury duty
- Legal issues
- Community service
- Waking up late
- Personal matters; when you have to stay home because cable guy is coming

- Broken water pipe

Commute delays/issues

- Conditions on road: parades/events, traffic hazards, rain, etc.
- Traffic
- Muni delay
- Home /car repair
- Storm
- Car broke down /vehicle problems
- Major problems on BART/BART delays
- Lack of parking
- Car trouble/BART delays

Take vacation

- To take a trip
- Scheduled day off
- Vacation
- Floating holidays
- Vacation; for traveling; to take care of things at home

Unable to get one-day vacation

- Need to be able to make multiple days on 1 request
- Sick leave will go down if you let people take vacation
- Leadership needs to be more timely with approvals or response
- Not permitted to have one-day vacation
- When you put in request for one-day vacation (family issue, doctor's apt), you may not get it because you have taken two already and someone else who requested too only has taken one in the past
- Not able to obtain day off requested
- One day time off
- We have a lot of people who take sick time to get 1-day vacation (b/c they did not get vacation)

Burning time

- Burn sick time
- If you don't use it, you lose it
- Burning sick time during retirement
- Had to use furlough or lose it
- Burning sick leave prior to retirement
- Using up max leave credit

Never been absent

- No absence problem/never absent
- Never absent! I am a great operator!
- Never been absent
- Never called in sick before

Other reasons

- 13 SP days
- Pet's illness
- Other various
- Sporting events/special events/religious events
- Attending conferences
- Training
- Exposure to marijuana smoke while driving bus - 2 days to get clearance
- 8-hours of sleep requirement (but can't call in sick)
- Problem with license and medical expiration - forced to take time off

Workplace dissatisfaction; low morale & motivation

- Coworkers are with leadership
- Double standard
- It's a game if you know certain rules, play around the rules (i.e. put in for a vacation for longer than you want off...take two days off and cancel the rest of the vacation)
- More compassion leadership
- Many management has never driven bus
- Better work comp – they only work w/ MTA that's why employees rather goes through disability instead of worker's comp
- Union doesn't support - "no union"
- Feels like you're being punished when you're sick – people shouldn't feel bad for being sick
- Fear around sickness
- Genuine feeling that they are being punished
- Discouraged to call-in; management think it's a pattern
- Morale
- Feel management doesn't care
- We have extremely unequal distribution of flexible schedules or telecommute in our department even if it is in our union contracts
- Didn't like my run at the time
- Beat location not good

Unexpected emergencies

- Unexpected situations
- Emergency situations or unexpected emergencies

Workplace is dirty

- Work place cleanliness
- Transit Operator's driver's seat area (clean) – Clean entire bus!
- Sometimes we call people to clean and they don't really clean - clean floor but no actual sanitation; filthy; dirty
- Maybe we should be provided with sanitation wipes by SFMTA; instead we have to bring our own

SFMTA: Absence Management Efforts Can Be Enhanced Through Improved Organizational Culture and More Effective Program Management Tools

IMPACTS[1]	Potrero	Flynn	Kirkland	Presidio	Green	Woods	Mainten-ance	Enforce-ment	Transit Superint.	Admin Staff	Mid-level Managers	Total
Workload increases or impacted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11
Low morale/motivation/perceived disrespect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	10
Unnecessary stress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		9
No impact			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Decreased productivity	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		6
Increased health problems	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					6
Transit service negatively impacted	✓	✓				✓			✓			4
Unable to get vacation/time-off						✓	✓	✓	✓			4
Conflict with management/central control		✓	✓	✓		✓						4
Discipline, formal or informal		✓						✓	✓		✓	4
Lack of clarity regarding leave use		✓							✓		✓	3
Impacts related to seniority and obsolete processes	✓	✓						✓				3
Need a break or time away		✓	✓							✓		3
Request not approved timely	✓					✓						2
Consistent application of attendance policy									✓			1
Never been absent									✓			1
Burning time									✓			1
TOTAL	8	10	7	6	6	9	6	7	11	6	5	

Notes:
1) Audit team created these categories and assigned responses to each.
2) Audit team conducted 12 focus group sessions, including 2 for administrative and professional staff, the results of which are combined here.

The table below contains comments made during the focus group discussions on the impacts of employee absences and are categorized in the context of impacts. Comments have been grouped according to auditor-determined categories for clarity and exact duplicates were removed.

Impacts - What happens when absences occur?
1. What happens in your unit when you or your staff members miss work? 2. Share a time when you or a coworker didn't show up to work, either for a short period of time or a long period of time, and what impacts the absence had on your division's operations. 3. How does it make you feel when your coworker is absent a lot? 4. What reactions do you notice in yourself when your staff is absent a lot?
Workload increases or impacted
• Get double workload when someone else calls in sick because dispatcher does not split shift; Makes me pissed then I will call in sick later in week
• More people
• No one fills run & driver deals with it
• Loss of layover
• Someone has to pick up the slack when I'm out and they're probably pissed about it
• Wouldn't call in sick - leader & followers
• If there's not enough drivers then it will affect you (no leader, no followers) – increases the # of passengers on your bus
• Central controls knows what buses aren't out, but they don't tell you, no relief
• We feel it when we are not fully staffed, which means we don't have extra boards / Work a lot harder
• No leader, no follower
• It may affect me on a daily basis: It is a lot to work to do double
• When you are missing a leader, while it may be extra work, your stress is lack of communication between you and dispatcher and having to prove that fact
• Scheduled for 8 hours straight and make it to the end of the line with 5 minutes to eat
• We had coworker out for short period of time; No one knew her computer access and what her tasks were; Her work was at standstill and we could not move projects forward and her work piled up; Her work was critical path; Someone else tried to help but did not know this employee's actual work; Lack of direction
• Someone who has approvals was out for a long period; Projects delayed because no approver; We also ended up wasting time; We didn't know to spend our time working on something else so we kept working on that project and at the end had to redo it; No backup
• My work depends on others; we work in a team environment but when I miss my work, it impacts the work on my plate and the process or delay; If I am able, I will check my emails and try to work anyway; I have no one to substitute myself; I feel badly if I am out and someone has to do my work; Sometimes I think it would be good to expand skills; Some people can feel that managers are not good role models who just disappear - Management should be open with staff so there is trust
• There are 6 of us in my group; There are 2-3 people who are consistently absent; We didn't

have backups but my supervisor created backups for these consistent absence-takers; It created resentment for us who have to be their backup; It adds to our workload since we are so small

- Same as others where work generally stops when someone is gone or others have to scramble and put on good face to get work completed; Even when long-term absences legitimate and planned, if you are in a resource-strained situation, it does create certain level of resentment
- Takes more effort to fill in for someone else; There is someone who has repeatedly come in late for meetings and it makes meetings less productive and feels disrespectful
- There are so many employees per shift and if one person is missing, it does impact other's work and productions
- Makes it hard for individuals to catch up on later shifts when people are away
- Have to pick up others; short-staffed
- If the Controller is out, then it's a problem because there is only one of him and he plans the work; it depends on job that you do
- One person does 1000 mile inspections and if he is not there, they have to pull someone else who can do that job
- We have a body shop and we only have 2 bodymen so one absence will impact work and you're scrambling to play catch up
- If secretary is out then reports don't get out because she's in charge of 2 main reports that need to get out
- My situation is different because I run solo; My work is still there when I come back from being absent; Critical position & no back up
- Have to get drafted for coverage depending on seniority
- Increases coverage / work load
- On a holiday, someone is sick all of a sudden; If there is a major event on a holiday, someone gets sick a couple days prior and they can't get drafted to work and they have lower seniority so someone with higher seniority has to work; impact to higher seniority people
- It gives me more area to work
- Increases workload and then unable to complete workload the same way if everyone there
- I'm a supervisor on a bicycle and cover 2 areas of the city; If we are short on supervisors, I have to get in a car and cover more areas; You have to adapt
- Depends on the shift, especially daytime; If it is day time, it does make the work harder and longer than on other shifts
- Benefits - I like it because I get to come in on overtime
- Not all beats can be completed
- The whole department becomes short and if something happens like a major accident and they need us for traffic control, we may not be able to make it happen - not available if accident happens
- Depends on classification and on job; Some classifications only have 1 or 2 people so fewer back up when someone calls in sick
- Everyone does not know the jobs; When dispatch calls and you are short-staffed you can't cover all areas
- My assistant superintendent gone for 3 weeks for leave and it was brutal

- I need to make them understand that their follower is impacted if the run is not filled
- Paperwork just gets backed up
- All coworkers (can be shop people and yard starters) impacted
- Increased work in possible discipline
- I see increased work for conferences on absenteeism and possible absenteeism
- Right now I am by myself with no assistant so it's more work
- Sometimes you don't have a chance to do an investigation with a magnifying glass
- We have nearly 600 people; my ears will fall off
- Project build-up; workload
- Person was out for extended periods of time and various reasons; This person supported the work of 2 dozen people in various ways; When she was out, projects built up and tasks were left undone; This person bent the rules a lot; So it impacted the morale of her equals
- We don't have job sharing or back up so no one can back me up
- There is no consistency in some of the tools we use; difficult transition for coverage
- Hard to get/access information due to different drives or process; Our IT group has tried to create a shared drive but they live as private houses so it's hard to connect across divisions
- But the plans and constructions etc. lives with the departments; Construction schedules impacted when ops are absent
- If we can't get answers on paint color or waterproof floors etc., it backs up our construction schedules as it relates to department supervisors (e.g., transit superintendents) since they are our clients
- But no second line/no support
- Hard to learn what someone else is doing if file structures not consistent
- There's a domino effect when someone is out because someone else has to cover for the absent person but that person's projects get delayed too
- We try to make sure that knowledge is shared equally in our team so that the rest of the group is not backed up when someone is out
- The impact is when someone is supposed to be at a board meeting or present at some meeting or deliverable that day; This kind of coverage is mostly impacted
- Since we have restructured our unit, the impact is minimal; Before, projects used to be assigned to one person; Since 2013, we have restructured into division by function; People have others to rely on
- The most impact is when people are away for over a month
- My unit is timeline driven
- My staff are assigned to different divisions and projects
- They can miss the deadline if they are absent for more than just one day and we don't know - biggest problem I have
- Impact is greater depending on level of authority that someone has
- When skills are not transferable (e.g., language translation), it is difficult if someone cannot respond to calls; need to reach out to someone else outside group
- Impacts vary: I manage diverse groups; One set is operations side - very distinct impacts when staff is absent; Overtime to ensure adequate coverage (negative impact OT SFMTA)

- I have a staff of 18 and I spend most of my time on absenteeism
- I always juggle with tight payroll deadline
- I am always balancing their days off with payroll deadlines
- I'm short staffed but don't have to be
- Can create havoc: trying to find people to get the work done; rearrange people and workload; disruptive to workflow - challenging
- We start out every week with a schedule but we always have to move people between floors; stop and restart work
- If someone has called in sick in one area and we have to move someone temporarily, it disrupts workflow
- It is not my job to get on a coworker if they are behind
- We are not machines
- I work swing shift; the other 7410s who work during the day don't work as much because buses are out on service; The ones on swing shift are impacted because all buses are back; Does not matter if we are the only ones left, we have to finish the job
- Extra work needs to get done
- When not filled, it affects me (no leader or follower) - you are doing your job and the missing person's job
- Tends to be a lot of questions when you come back; huge load when I come back
- When operators don't show up, a lot of the responsibility is placed on the superintendent

Low morale/motivation/perceived disrespect

- No accountability from mgmt. (no consequence for giving you misinformation)
- Professional respect (walk down hallway and don't say hi)
- Being courteous
- Management ignores you
- Treat me like dirt
- Until you've reach 5 years, you don't get acknowledged for anything…no appreciation!
- #s, not humans
- Management looks down on staff
- Attitudes/frustration
- No cleanliness on bus & driver area
- Management treatment towards others is biggest issue
- Concern for coworkers when they are sick
- Superintendents without experience
- MTA needs to change the interior of the bus (cleanliness) / More clean buses
- Feeling unsupported by SFMTA (City leadership, 1 SVN, Central Control, and Superintendents)
- If SFMTA cares about its staff, it should send PCOs or sheriffs to address those drivers who park in the bus lanes
- Issues with cleanliness; porta-potties; bathrooms - no dignity; Especially when you work dusk to

dawn and there are no lights

- We need compassionate leadership, one that will listen and empathize; I need something more in addition to just being compensated for the extra work
- No recognition if do something right; not respected; too much expected of operators
- "we are the backbone of this" and "they treat us like garbage"
- It's a culture
- I believe that the people are Muni's #1 customer but truly we are & we should be treated as such
- If we were treated like we were the #1 priority, things would be a lot better
- First place I worked where you can't take sick leave until a certain amount of time; created potential discomfort when I first started because I was sick; had to take leave without pay; doesn't feel so respectful of a work-life balance
- Also works in small group; uncertainty of people who are consistently absent; feeling that no one in management is monitoring absences
- We want leaders who walk the talk and who are accountable; feels hypocritical when managers are not accountable; there is a domino effect; you stop respecting your management; when management tells me I am late for a meeting, I start to resent and start to point other people - result is defensive and accusatory; creates a hostile and stressful environment; when your manager is not clearly communicating their absences and you as a staff feel lost, you are not getting the guidance you need to perform at your best and your work will be undermined - hits morale and motivation;
- Tone at the top
- No management accountability
- Creates low morale
- Hypocritical behavior from managers
- Fear of management
- Creates low motivation
- We have at least 3 or 4 guys always missing; some people take advantage of the system
- Some people supposed to work Monday and Friday and they can call in sick during their regular work schedule and then show up on their day off to get OT
- First affected production and second affected morale
- Dispatchers make us feel like we are bothering them
- I hear rumblings about people taking vacation and others get frustrated because they can't take that long, etc.
- Cubicles are sad; needs improvement - open space
- Forced to call in sick to address my personal problems (e.g., renew my DMV registration, etc.); it's frustrating because I work my schedule and people abuse the system and the ones who are working; today is an even number day, we only wash buses with even numbers à affects service because some buses don't get washed
- I need professional respect and I need fairness; there needs to be an exploration when there are complaints other than assuming I am guilty before
- We have management instead of leadership - leadership motivates & management scares; work harder, carry more passengers, does not matter how we feel

Unnecessary stress

- Unnecessary stress
- Stressful
- Passenger abuse
- People get frustrated at you
- Job can make you sick, stressful / diseases
- Go by seniority - creates stress
- When we are not fully staffed, we work like crazy and we feel stressed/sick - mentally, physically
- Stresses on the line - taxis, Uber cars going around buses, Lyft, bicycles, pedestrians
- Stress prove to leader missing/out
- Stress also comes from passengers
- Puts me in a bad attitude and I don't like to go there
- I will get compensated but it does not matter because I'm tired
- So many operators have been getting letters about being out sick too much and this adds stress
- Sometimes you can get frustrated and sometimes you just go with the flow
- Creates stress that could potentially be eliminated
- Sometimes you are on your run during sign-ups and this affects you for the next 3-4 months
- If they let the driver know then it doesn't create stress for me
- My leader or follower playing games bothers me more
- If they are there but not doing the job, that upsets me more than them not being there at all
- Getting in trouble for eating a peanut
- Even if you have 5 minutes at the end of the line, passengers are demanding to get on and if they see you eating then they call central and complain
- Stress leads to: driver driving upset, calling in sick, irritable-gets upset easily
- If dispatcher says they need to see you at the end of the shift but tells you early during your shift, then it adds stress/preferable to have that communication near end of shift
- Dealing with various elements and supervisors, it creates stress and health and safety risks so people call out sick
- Some people quit because they cannot take the pressures any more
- We had someone who had to be absent for child care; Lack of flex time within work schedule creates additional stress on coworkers
- Creates hostile & stressful environment
- You get frustrated/stressed and then decided to call in sick to get a break
- Puts additional stress on coworkers
- Internal and external stresses (e.g., media)
- 1:600 ratio was stressful/challenging
- Sign up at the time so workload was stressful
- I have to sit down with people to ask what is going on and it creates stress and anxiety because

I do not like having to have these conversations

- It's hard to get emails asking me what I am doing about it

No impact

- Don't care if people call in sick as long as it doesn't affect me
- Doesn't affect me if people gone for a long time
- Often times we don't feel it because we have extra boards
- It does not affect me directly; it is the dispatcher's job to fill the run; stress from dispatcher
- Nothing happens - the runs get covered by someone else
- Doesn't bother me when a coworker is absent
- It doesn't impact me because my task is more important than yard starter or other jobs so I don't get moved to make up for anyone else but if I am out, people have to be transferred to move here
- Automotive greater impact than mechanics; For mechanics, we have 16 mechanics on day shift so there are a few of us so the impact is not as great for us
- Doesn't bother me when people are absent
- Don't bother me; not a problem
- I have no control over someone calling in sick and I don't feel badly about it
- Does not affect me personally but maybe areas of coverage; shift coverage; may not have ability to cover additional; We might cover less area when it comes to enforcement; We are 12 in our watch; if 2 call of sick, some of their beat shifts to others;
- Does not affect me
- I think that even if I don't take off, the buses are still going to pull out and that services will happen
- I am not affected as others who have been there longer
- I can always work from afar
- Their absences have a bigger impact than my absence
- When I miss my work, it does not involve other people internally so it does not impact my colleagues
- I feel like I am at a position where if I am out, I don't slow things down for other projects
- Things I do does not affect other people
- Over the years, we've established a good organized filing system
- No impacts - I have back-ups and if they are gone, the work still gets done
- Depends on type of work and on skills determines the impact
- On admin side, impacts are lessened because staff can cover for each other; It may mean workflow is delayed but it doesn't stop
- I do not care if someone is there or not; we care about getting the work done

Decreased productivity

- Come to work sick
- When sick, I can't focus
- People fall asleep while driving
- Makes you tired
- If they do come in when they are really sick, they got others sick, which impacts production as well
- You may not be able to accomplish it as effectively or efficiently but I can get it done
- So if I have to cover for someone, there is a transition cost of having to figure out how they are doing things
- The run does not run smoothly unless everyone does what they need to
- Stressed or stressed from the prior day/stress wears you out

Increased health problems

- Don't want to get sick
- 8-hr run, no break (why is there no break?)/no bathroom break
- Chronic time of flu
- Causes stress; stress is killing me and killing my coworkers - affects our life expectancy
- Work with medical: We have a lot of people with high blood pressure and with diabetes; people need to eat - we are rushed and don't have time to go the bathroom - it is a choice between eating and going to the bathroom
- Health impacted: effects - diabetes, fatigue, high blood pressure, kidney issues
- Health and safety of our operators matters
- Breaks too short or doesn't happen; impacts health & safety - stomach cramping, headache, kidney issues, bladder issues
- No appropriate time to recover
- Plays on health and safety
- People are sick a lot

Transit service negatively impacted

- Run might not go out
- Follower does not have a leader
- People have to wait longer for a bus
- Responsibility of dept. to bear if we get into an accident
- Forced to drive sick and that puts passengers in danger
- Running late
- Upset passengers

- Sometimes the run is filled and sometimes it is not
- SFMTA has unrealistic schedules and I think this is SFMTA's #1 problem
- Plays on my emotional state of mind, then my customer service
- Runs don't go out means people don't get to where they need to
- More scrutiny from the public
- Impacts: service suffers, public suffers; dispatchers and supervisors are affected because they are scrambling to figure out what to do
- The services will occur regardless if I am there but it's the operators that need to be there or services will not happen

Unable to get vacation/time-off

- I need a day off and ask for a vacation day but I don't get approved even if I have the days off
- Your schedules are locked in for 3-4 months and within time period you need a day off but unable to get day off so call in
- Biggest problem is you cannot schedule one-day off; even if you put in notice in advance you only know the day before
- Group agrees that biggest reason for absences is not being able to take one-day vacation
- Some people call in sick too to extend the one-day vacation
- Problem with the City and with the union in terms of the absence management program – allows for abuse; difficult to get one day off
- People call in sick for vacations
- This week its graduation; you can't get off but they will take it off because they want to see their children graduate
- Can't plan ahead/your life
- Even if I have been here for 18 years, I am not be able to get the days because of the shift I am on

Conflict with management/central control

- Being informed about absences where it effects your route
- Central control needs better communication/informative
- Drivers help each other on road (central should help with communication to help move buses around)
- Management & dispatchers should help you, support you, don't give bad information…if you don't know, say you don't know
- When call in to take restroom break, makes feel like bad
- No communication Transit Superintendents & Central Control; dispatcher communication
- Central Control: you contact them out of a need for help but they take it as you calling for no important reason but to bother them; they don't like to be bothered; they don't like to alleviate any situation; then when you get in trouble, they ask you why you did that and if you got

permission

- If Troy was running late and Pete was right behind, the most efficient thing to do is for Troy to skip a bus stop but they can't unless they call
- Central Control example: Pull-in switch broken - I called Central and they said that no one else has called it in; usually inspector sent out to observe; not sent out this time; going slow on Fillmore but it broke again - said it was the second time it broke; Impact: tear down overhead and be charged with an accident
- Central questions requests/reports; inspector had to validate statement/cost time & stress/depends on who's there/unaware of issues
- Issues with central controls: has been going on for years but worse now; depends on who takes the call and if they have not driven the same bus or the bus at all then they don't sympathize
- My superintendent says he cannot approve and forces me to let the dispatcher deal with it
- The superintendent says that they are no longer allowed to approve; It's got to go to someone above him in special circumstances
- We have had superintendents in the past tell us to call out sick if not approved
- My issue is with ghost riders - they are there but they are not; you are jam-packed picking up all these people; call central to let them know; next thing you know, the next bus appears right behind (the bus which is supposed to be between 5 and 10 minutes behind me but they go away, park and then come back)
- Professionalism in Central and dispatch is an issue
- In training, we are taught that no question is dumb and not to worry about scheduling; but we are made to feel dumb when we ask questions
- I was new and lost and driving at night; called central and told to find her way and hung up
- Being new, I got my detail for next day: I show up to relieve the 23 line then I find another classmate to do same run. I call dispatch and I was told I was due on the 27 line in 8 minutes. Then I didn't have a route sheet for the 27 line because that's not where I was told. Dispatch told her hopefully someone owns up to this mistake and hung up
- Route sheets change, dispatch not helpful
- Better communication

Discipline, formal or informal

- PSR/accidents/write-up
- We have a lot of senior operators over 20 years and I struggle having to bring these employees in
- When we have conferences with operators who are absent a lot, we try to identify solutions; they don't need to be specific about their condition but we talk about being healthy, exercising; just try to help them identify solutions so they don't need to be absent; try to offer solutions to help them come to work
- My reaction is to go through the process:
- Look at absence record and proceed accordingly; we have our rules and our job is to follow
- I'm there to administer the policies and provide information for avenues that they can utilize so

they have the information for the services they need

- One is correcting the absenteeism behavior
- You cannot discipline people for canceling vacation
- "Here we go again"
- I respond differently to vacation and I tend to say "they are sick again??" when it is a sick call but then I check and it's not as much
- A lot of who have been here for so many years have no way to cash out. As we approach retirement, we don't want to give it back. We earned that time. Now we would be penalized.

Lack of clarity regarding leave use

- Old employees get penalized - no idea it was happening
- Don't know what is considered sick abuse
- For me, there is a challenge getting understanding that utilization of sick time is not an all-coverage (i.e., just to get a day off work)
- Our operators don't understand how it affects their retirement
- I find myself getting very frustrated trying to communicate this to people and when quantity that people take off is above expectations
- Difficult to differentiate between absenteeism monitoring versus people really needing to use sick time
- I know that Civil Service system means you have rights with this job; I don't think employees have enough appreciation for the job; there is a sense of entitlement
- I've had people tell me that my family tells me I have to do something and I can because I work for the City and its ok - I say it is not appropriate
- Planned vs. unplanned different reactions

Impacts related to seniority and obsolete processes

- Someone off for months & comes back right before sign-up to get run & take off again - Seniority
- Assigned last routes
- If sick, doctor's note required - if not turned in by 12pm, you are required to take another day off (even if no sick time available because of probation period)
- I have noticed management always says "seniority only gets you to your watch, not your detail"
- "Seniority only matters when it matters to management"

Need a break or time away

- Day off makes a difference
- Need mental health day
- Some people take days off because they need a mental health day or they are disgruntled so having an element of work that is positive or free time for you to be creative would help
- Breaks are not enough (especially for new drivers like me)

Request not approved timely

- Requests for days off - not knowing if you can get days off until week before
- Even if you put in month in advance, you only know you're going to get it the day before
- I won't even bother putting in a request because most of the time, it is not approved
- 1-day vacations granted on based on how many drivers available to work and they won't know until day before
- Timely response from management re: OT, 1-day VA, floater
- Untimely response

Never been absent

- I don't miss work
- I don't take much off at all

Burning time

- They have to take time off so they don't lose it
- I know people who are burning their time because they don't want to give it back but they would rather come to work.

In what ways, if at all, do you think leadership style influences staff attendance and morale?[46]

Consistent application of attendance policy

- I think a lot of this is also clear guidelines from management. We are trying to enforce things/go through the process because these are the guidelines. We are in arbitration and we lose and are told we aren't following the process right. Are we being supported or not? Or are we being put in a place for failure?

Discipline, formal or informal

- I found that if you call the operators in and they get an understanding of the consequences of continuing to call in sick. But they still do it. There is a meeting of the minds but that didn't stop them. Also, worse with information given by union.

Low morale/motivation/perceived disrespect

- If somebody has to take off, they will take off (regardless of leadership style). Leadership style does affect morale and how they do their work or other aspects of work though.
- Yes. You get a lot of operators who like the division they are at so they are happy to be there but there are others who wish they could be somewhere else and they have a bad attitude with the other operators. The appearance of the division impacts how the operators feel too. The buildings are old and dirty.

[46] This question was only posed to transit superintendents and mid-level managers. The comments below were made in response.

SFMTA: Absence Management Efforts Can Be Enhanced Through Improved Organizational Culture and More Effective Program Management Tools

SOLUTIONS[1]	Potrero	Flynn	Kirkland	Presidio	Green	Woods	Maintenance	Enforcement	Transit Superint.	Admin Staff[2]	Mid-level Managers	Total
Develop/revise attendance and leave policies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11
Use data and technology better, including to analyze sick usage/ abuse and adequate staffing levels		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Compassionate/supportive leaders		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Professional respect/feeling valued	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		8
Better communication		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	8
Consistent application of attendance policy	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	8
Educate staff on attendance policy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	8
Incentivize and recognize good attendance	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		7
Union support and collaboration	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	7
Mutual collaboration		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	6
Ensure staff is aware of health/ wellness programs available & provide opportunities for them to participate		✓						✓		✓	✓	4
Incorporate adequate break/recovery time		✓	✓	✓	✓							4
Increase management accountability and transparency		✓	✓							✓	✓	4
Clean workplace		✓		✓	✓							3
Cross-training of skills								✓	✓	✓		3
Promote from bottom up w/ experience		✓		✓								2
Educate the public	✓			✓								2
Focus on performance management											✓	1
Improve workspace										✓		1
Team-building activities to boost morale										✓		1
TOTAL	7	13	10	13	8	7	7	8	9	13	11	

Notes:
1) Audit team created these categories and assigned responses to each.
2) Audit team conducted 12 focus group sessions, including 2 for administrative and professional staff, the results of which are combined here.

The table below contains comments made during the focus group discussions on solutions to excessive absences and are categorized in the context of solutions. Comments have been grouped according to auditor-determined categories for clarity and exact duplicates were removed.

Solutions – What changes would you like to see to control absences and improve attendance?

1. If you had the authority to make any changes in your organization, what changes would you make to the agency's procedures, policies or practices to better control absences and improve attendance?
2. What do you want your agency to do differently to better manage absences and improve attendance?
3. What would you change about yourself to help your organization control absences and improve staff attendance?

Develop/revise attendance and leave policies

Increase amount of sick or vacation time

- Old policy - 5 sick calls in a quarter without penalty
- When on probation, don't get anything
- 13 days is nothing per year - add more time
- Sick time
- Add a floating holiday (change a legal holiday)
- Give us more time because we are picking up so many people and we have no protection from viruses; management does not consider that we are at higher risk for getting sick from passengers and no protection
- More floating holidays (5)
- I think the sick time policy is strange for new employees since they have to take unpaid leave - Revisit sick policy around probationary status

Increase flexibility in use of leave time

- Bump it up from 3 people per watch so that senior PCOs get the same days off
- You're forcing me to take a whole day off even if I only have a doctor's appointment
- How come we can't have another sign off for one-day vacations? To eliminate people calling in sick/vacation days then cancelling them; waiting list exists but maybe dispatchers should call to confirm people who requested days off; how can we create a better system to facilitate as it relates to one or two day vacations versus people taking a full week?
- System to better facilitate 1-2 days off & having to cancel
- Don't make it difficult for people to get one-day vacation
- Better policy to allow 1-day off / flexibility to be able to plan life, e.g., have more vacation than sick leave, be able to use vacation - more flexibility
- Based on how the policy is written and implemented, we are unable to take one-day vacation. As a result, we simply make a choice to call in sick.
- Can't schedule 1-day off / Don't find out until the day before; most not approval and already made mind up that going to take the day off

- Vacation only in 1 week blocks
- Ability to take more or less than 5 days - Currently, you have to sign up for one whole week (5 full days) increments; One PCO signed up for 2 weeks in August but I only want to take 9 or 10 days, you end up blocking out days someone else might want
- I would START a process that would allow operators to get one-day vacation and not be notified just the day before.
- Scheduling one day offs
- Change so people bid on vacation requests - 1-day requests
- No other options than to call out sick - floating holiday
- Emergency COMP time usage instead of sick leave (Port of Oakland); if you implement something like emergency comp time (like for family emergency), you can use that instead of 2 floating holidays per year or sick
- If I have 2 week vacation but I only have 1 week vacation hours, I can't use sick to use the balance - used to be able to use before/change policy to use vacation and sick together
- Would have preferred to not have the furlough days that I have to use or lose; more flexibility in how people can use the time - not use or lose
- I work at other places where sick leave is combined with others
- Pooled VAC & SPL - use however way; PTO - use however you want; flexible
- We need to make attendance valuable. It is good to combine time and use it however you want. This would make it more valuable.

Revise request and approval process

- Cumbersome approval process for vacation - it's too much
- Eliminate approval for one-day vacation or floating holiday (24 hours prior) - give immediate approval because people will call out sick anyway
- We need to be able to address our personal needs without this long cumbersome approval process
- We need a system/process that allows us to reasonably receive the days we are requesting off
- Approval process for one-day vacation
- Process of getting leave for FMLA can be difficult (one said it wasn't for him but one said it was)
- We need a better method / system for scheduling, tracking, approving requests so operators can see things are happening fairly; more transparency in areas of requests for vacation and leaves, etc. / Open calendar for people to see or community book
- Vacation approvals should be first come, first served / vacation requests needs improvement
- They should be able to request their vacation and get it approved in advance.
- At least let us know ahead of time instead of the evening of the day before the vacation request to plan
- We want copies of our requests but we are told to just leave it - I have put in a leave slip then next thing I know it is up on the window (meaning it was not done correctly) and only a coworker told me / Leave slips need to be tracked and communicated

- Maybe shorten request window from 60 to 30 days

Modify seniority system

- Change/modify seniority system to make more fair
- Just because we have seniority, does not mean that we are more important than someone else who just started
- Forced to call in sick since no seniority to choose vacation; I think the seniority policy does not always work - I don't get Christmas off after being here 18 years so I call in sick
- I would get rid of signups for detail (6 months) and there should be a limit to every 2 years so that lower seniority can have a chance to try the beats that higher seniority employees take regularly
- Unsure with how seniority works for secretaries citywide and division specific; I work with operations and people get suspended for 5 days for sick leave usage
- Sign up rotation (address seniority) - We do have a rotation when sign up for additional hours but it does not always go by seniority (1 to 300)
- First come, first served system for 1 day vacations
- Lottery for 2nd week vacation to give everybody a chance; I've seen in private sector that you put in your request for your one week and it is based on lottery basis to give everyone a chance
- Improve vacation sign-up: Annual sign ups at beginning of year for vacation and it is by seniority; Higher seniority occupy the good dates; Lower seniority do not have dates that they want to; Maybe we do first round and everyone gets one week so higher seniority don't get all weeks and do second week

Allow for more flexible work schedules

- I think people calling in sick would be drastically reduced if we worked 4/10 (10 hour shift and 3 days off)
- 4 days/10 hours shift is better -> job is dangerous; less commute
- Flexible schedules (9/80, flex hours, am/pm productive)
- Telecommuting policy still shows up as pilot for 7-8 years and it does not reflect current working styles
- The official telecommuting policy needs to be updated; needs to be redefined, revamped; needs to be followed; equity; make more clear
- In our CP&C and Safety departments (some Taxi), several people can work 9/80
- Flexible work schedules also includes not being so stringent
- I think there is value in face to face contact but if it is reasonable for their job description and there are no other issues with attendance then for many of us, the principle job is communicating with other people and responding to people
- Our CFO does not allow telecommuting (FIT)
- I like working at home because I work better at night
- You have to trust that I may not answer the email at 8am but I will answer it at 1am - Trust to allow flexibility; responsiveness
- I came from the consulting side and I was on a very flexible team
- I do not think me being here makes me more productive here than at home

- How about how we do business about how we do scheduling? Operators want days off, like 4/10 schedule. An extra day off changes my whole day because I can do more.
- I'd like to see official flex time; I work a lot at night

Create clear and fair leave policies

- There is no sick policy; CSC Rule 420/Chapter 12W is what they get hit with when they have meetings with superintendents; now every day you call in sick is counted against you; must call in everyday - if sick 3 days, 3 occurrences
- Unfair vacation rules
- Policy unclear - cell phone usage
- Stop penalizing for absences (FMLA)
- Forced to lie about being sick
- Some people abuse it so this affects those who do not take advantage of it
- If you have sick hours, be allowed to use
- Fair policy needed
- For the fairness aspect, to accommodate requests, they should at least give operators option to take 2 days off in a year and allow them to take it / 2 vacation personal days off / 1st come, 1st served / FHP (already given 2 scheduled per year sign up)
- A real policy
- I would STOP with guidelines and START an actual attendance policy.
- We need an agency-wide policy to address our sick and vacation or if not agency-wide (policies for different groups), & should communicate this so everyone knows that there is a policy
- Personal leave policy that City has to (the 1 year rule)
- Policy - smart, makes sense
- Policies & Procedures and management need to change
- Policy? Sick then vacation but not vacation then sick/not policy but past practice
- Look into vacation requests (Saturdays) - The other thing I noticed when I worked on Saturday was that some people's regular day off would be every Saturday for 3 months - Management to ensure not same people get Saturdays off
- Some people cancel their single days off at the last minute so maybe require that they give advance notice so other people can take that day off
- How do we mitigate being called an abuser but we are not? How should we look at what is really determined sick abuse?

Other comments

- Better coordination of leaves but not guaranteed you'll get it
- Family sickness (13 days) - sick, vacation, family leave usage, difficulty in getting leaves approved
- They need to honor a doctor's note
- People go to work sick so they don't get on the sick abusive list; doctor's note should cover it
- Required to come in sick but federal law requires us to make announcements

- If sick one day, extend probation
- Consider new ways to do things
- If I can't get vacation, dispatchers tell me to hit the sick book then I get in trouble for sick abuse
- Suggesting fiscal year instead of rolling so that it is a clean slate at the start of the fiscal year
- No more sick run pay
- Superintendents - now have to go above them to get vacation approved - forced to call in sick
- Look at policy/would cut sick leave
- If taking sick, will take 2-3 days instead of just 1 because you're already calling in
- Be able to plan vacation then use sick leave
- Sick hour buyback (e.g., come up with cut off like 100 hours)
- Health and safety when driving bus sick; At other divisions, some superintendents call the operators on every absence, especially new ones - scaring new operators about calling in sick - fear around calling in sick when really sick
- Day shift: we have 15-16 mechanics; Not hard to schedule time off so we may have less sick calls; Versus swing shift or graveyard where 7 or 8 mechanics in swing and 4 in graveyard; Anything under 10 employees, only 1 allowed to be off at a time
- Overtime policy should be different; Management can easily find people to cover shifts for people who are out
- 1 person for every 10 people per watch and the allow the same number of people half day off
- We do a 6 month shift change and people put in their requested day off but there is a 60 day rule (single day for 60 days)
- I think 60 days is better because of flexibility for planning but management should review trends or patterns in canceling
- Overtime should be managed better; list of people who want OT/weekends
- It is good in some instance if someone lets you know way in advance
- We have a lot of people who use FMLA; count FMLA as sick day off
- If you are a parent, you are going to go. It may be encouraging employees to sign for days off on weekday.
- Better ways to manage absences
- Can't address absence until they take a year off
- 12 rolling month period - should stop every fiscal year

Use data and technology better, including to analyze sick usage/abuse and adequate staffing levels

Use data to analyze patterns of leave usage and identify abuse

- If sick, should not come in - As leadership, assess how people use their sick time and identify abuse; managers look at the here and now (e.g., last quarter you were sick X amount but could have been valid) - do trend analysis over a longer period of time
- If I go pass my quota, you see me as an abuser but that is not the case - determine what abuse is; need analytics

- The pattern of sick abuse is ridiculous - eliminate the sick abuse pattern
- Pattern of every Monday or Friday calling in sick then I wonder what is going on
- Better identify abuse of sick use - Habitual use and certain patterns is certainly identifiable at the staff level
- It is not perceived as illness is every other Thursday before alternative schedule
- Use data to monitor and track patterns of leave
- Meet weekly to find out who is out and determine the reasons and patterns
- Same people use workers comp like clockwork - watch usage of time off
- Use data analytics, look for trends

Use data and technology to ensure adequate staffing

- Staffing - now have more staff so coverage is there (Operations trumps everything)
- My boss was going to get another FTE; there is always someone absent in our small group and this has an impact on the work we do and on our morale; today 2 people absent; can you use this as justification to hire?; 75% of the time, someone is always absent
- No one at SFMTA checks for the unexpected situations, like sick or retirement we are always short because they do not replace those people
- Hire & replace vacancies; better control around attrition rate of the organization
- Look at scheduling & conduct needs assessment for better staffing coverage
- Re-evaluate the number of PCOs allowed to be off; depending on size of watch is 3 to 4 people allowed to be off; these numbers were decided on back in the 1990s when we had half the size of our PCOs; we should increase the slots given the growth
- Hire adequate staffing levels
- Although is not cost effective to have extra board operators, but if you really want less absenteeism, you need to have more people available to fill behind so you can give; have more people to backfill - conduct needs analysis

General comments on use of data and technology

- I think it is important to also be familiar with the City's systems and expectations of us when we are absent; better training to use technology
- Reconcile what we have done in the past and what we do now; Use technology better
- SFMTA needs to determine the impact that absenteeism has not just org as a whole but by division, by job class, by shift
- Enabling this to happen would be IT support and better systems or processes
- It would be nice if when we track our time, it would go directly into PeopleSoft instead of using an excel spreadsheet - would make it easier to track our time and ensure accuracy of data; automatic to download centrally
- Determine impact by division; not only department
- It would be interesting to track human behavior and ergonomics of whole office floor and see productivity and absences
- We believe there is a correlation between set up of our space and productivity and absences

- Laptops! We all need laptops
- Need better hardware/software support to allow telework
- Management and systems.
- I need data and systems/objective information because I am not measuring it, I can't manage it
- Analytics to determine needs; time is needed to do the analysis - esp. operations
- Develop appropriate metrics
- This would also improve our morale; We have metrics to show that morale is low; We do the employee survey and the numbers show it; From my lens, it is a morale issue
- Look at the hours the operators have on the books

Other comments

- There are a lot of people in probationary period now; we are using a lot
- People take sick as vacation but they do it last minute
- Before people were suspended, but FMLA help eased
- We should allow people to do the details that they want to do
- Management should count or track these days separately and not as regular days off so those slots open up
- Someone needs to deal with FMLA abuse in the agency
- I also think the issue becomes problematic when people end up in ADA

Compassionate/supportive leaders

- Compassionate leaders needed
- Not to put pressure/stress on new employees
- Be more understanding that the return to work process is an all-day process & not get penalized because management not available to sign on paperwork during office hours. I have to take additional days to return to work when I've been ready (ready Friday to sign off and report to work Saturday but have to wait until Monday). If superintendent not present, another person in management should be able to clear operators to return to work.
- Have managers that care about their employees "have their backs"
- Management needs to be supportive
- They only care about getting the bus out and running
- Leadership needs to make sure staff understands policies and procedures and when someone has a problem, show these people that we care and discuss how we can help
- Help individuals if pattern
- Many people, many construction, problems
- Both driver and passenger safety have to be priority
- I had a meeting with my superintendent for 5 absences in the calendar year; I could not even speak at the meeting yesterday but I had to come in and drive the bus; Why would you have your bus driver come back to drive a bus on a busy line and a tourist line?; Tourists ask: Why does she have to come to work; if sick - looks bad to public

- Safety (e.g., mask while driving)
- Stay home if sick
- Management doesn't understand their issues
- I need management understanding and professional respect from my leadership and for them to be able to feel comfortable ask me
- Management's priority is on time service but my line is 30 Stockton (china town), my bus is full front to back so how do you expect me to get to Sutter and Stockton on time when you have tourists that want to go to Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, Palace of Fine Arts
- To increase our service level of on-time performance, we need assistance & we need help Assistance monitoring at the bus stops, especially on heavy point areas; on all door entrance for critical lines
- When buses can have boarding on front and back, the driver has lost control of the bus
- I want less time points - This is Muni trying to catch us off time ; Lots of points cause lots of stress
- Superintendent here is better - superintendents not all the same
- I would like upper management (whoever makes the decisions) to sit in my seat with me to see the things that I get asked to see; do what I do; sit down together before decisions get made - more collaborative relationship with leadership
- As far as upper management, I think they should be trained to drive a bus and drive a week or two (like undercover boss); walk a day in my shoes
- I believe that they know what is going on/what we are going through but they do not care
- If you are sick but want to add it to your days off to be able to really rest then it becomes a pattern
- I want concern, compassion, consideration
- They group us. Look at us as individuals
- Management should get more information instead of just giving out sick abuse letters; actively listen to Transit Operators instead of putting people into a box; consideration; make right decisions
- let SFMTA management know that this group wants to hear from them because they think nothing is going to happen
- If SFMTA could help with child care like drop in daycare or something; if my daycare can't take my child kids, I have to stay home
- I think management needs to be more flexible with PCOs, not the supervisors since we are smaller
- You have majority of supervisors who, when you want to speak to them or request days off, will have your back; very supportive supervisors (85% estimate by one employee); But you have another group of supervisors who, when you ask for days off or support, you don't get that but you get attitude (15% estimate by one employee)
- I think Enforcement has a bad disease of bad attitude; I didn't get this when I was PCO so why should you get this as PCO; Very strong sentiment
- Management need to get out of office and get out to field to understand what PCOs are doing
- We need to come together; Leadership needs to get out of the office & get part of the solution
- We need support

- I make individual adjustments for various situations.
- Encourage staff to sign; give options
- Maybe we come up with ways for people to have free creative time
- We need leadership to buy-in / be more flexible and come into the 21st century.
- People need training and support on how to hold people accountable/performance management
- We need to address the issues within our employee survey to address morale
- When folks aren't happy, they don't come to work
- All in agreement that training and support needs to be here as well
- It is important there is an integrity and morale issue
- Know what it takes to be an operator so we are on the same page/ So we feel understood - Psychological & physical issues are involved

Professional respect/feeling valued

- Value the employee
- Managers devalue drivers
- One line is not any better than another
- Respect
- You feel forced to explain your sickness and prove your sickness (e.g., emergency) to manager - You don't want everyone to know your business/you feel violated as it relates to your personal business. Not be harassed to provide more proof other than doctor's note.
- It's like we are kids; we should be able to use the vacations we have
- We need professional respect
- Seems like you are guilty before the facts are even flushed out
- You are at fault because you are requesting so much time off or you could have prevented your illness
- Our superintendent always says that we are all adults here; downtown should treat us the same
- Most of the people that come to work all the time do not want to abuse the system; we are all on the same page
- We are not respected / Central is your world but Central talks to you like you are a "fool" / "dog" / They are rude / They are disrespectful / They belittle you / They make you feel small
- I call Central to let them know that the shocks on the bus make them throw up and down and I don't think I should drive; They say take the bus to terminal and pull over; I call back and say I can't make it to terminal and it is unsafe and I will pull over; "You need to take my direction and do what I tell you"; They are worried about the passengers, not me; I pulled the bus over anyway
- Central is poorly trained and they get the impression that they are annoyed and that you are bothering them; need to be supported
- Deal w/ stress, not appreciated - "your fault", Told to continue in service even if unsafe; There is no release for us that we get so stressed and it affects our personal life and well-being that we say we can't take it anymore and have to call in - then this creates another issue because we need to get a doctor's note for stress (catch 22)

- I'd like to see 1 SVN change their work schedule and function like we function
- I'd like to see 1 SVN drive the bus
- We are the front line people and are affected in the media; the service is bad because of us; the cost to the public is because of us - it is NOT because of us / "get thrown under bus" - "not us"
- Professional respect
- Feel valued & treated with dignity
- First thing I would do is treat employees well and with professional respect so they would do a better job for you and increase productivity
- Comes down to the dispatcher - favoritism re: approvals, schedules
- Transparency from dispatchers (requests are dated anyway) / Visibility
- Liberal policy - superintendents not approachable
- Harassment about calling in sick
- "Don't call me"; call when at end of line to avoid lost concentration; discomforting & takes focus away - safety issue
- Sometimes central calls and forgets the instructions they gave you
- We want to build professionalism and commitment to the organization, your profession, and your job.
- Educate on values & how they fit in the City / organization; When I try to express that an employer has an expectation that we go to work, I ask them how they would feel if the SFPD in their town behaved in the same way; What is interesting in these conversations is that our employees would not accept the same behavior in other industries that they rely on.
- We need to create some messaging about people's values and commitment to the organization and services.
- I don't see the same work ethic with the new employees. The quality of the work and commitment to the organization is different. SFMTA is hiring younger. We have to give the new employees a better foundation of the rules, expectations and idea that if they are not committed to that, they should be out the door. When I started understanding work life, I worked with adults who had a different work ethic.
- If people felt more invested in the agency as a whole or were more empowered with work that is connected across divisions
- Maybe if people felt strongly about the things they were working on, the mental health days off might go down
- Staff need to understand how their work fits into the bigger picture and how they are connected to their stakeholders (colleagues in same/other divisions) and who is impacted
- I think it is beyond that – sometimes I am given the tasks of doing the prelim analytical work and when it comes to the time to presentation to the board etc. and the manager says they will do that but I did all the work
- Having the ability to take the next step would be nice
- Have the opportunity to share in the full development of that work; the value of the work is noted when you see the process
- Bringing staff to the board for example allows for professional development because you know

what is expected

- I think it is more accountability than recognition
- I do think recognition is important
- People recognize your value, notice your work, and genuine recognition
- Find ways to ensure that employees feel valued in the organization
- So people know that they are not just working hard to get a paycheck
- At some point, we have to instill a level of professionalism

Better communication

- Communication needs to be better as it relates to leadership & union
- Better & more communication - do not know about leave request until last day
- Maybe SFMTA should hold focus groups like this where we can share regularly.
- Unclear policies & better communication and understanding about policies in place and we all need to be on the same page
- My bus was on fire at Daly City BART station; Central said to driver to go back to bus and take a look; Extinguisher exploded later
- Post announcements
- Small font & Transit Operators have to rewrite his routes/time points to be able to read the paddle
- Learning process / Needs to be better informed about get more support
- We need better communication
- Better communication, collaboration between management and staff
- Managers do not always realize that we have to reprioritize to put out fires and something else we were working on has to be stopped
- Transparency: Managers have different leading styles; some are more understanding and others are so secretive; One time I suggested having work schedules be open so know where managers are so we can find them but we could not
- Open sign-ups (7410 & secretaries too) - I hear the union hasn't done a sign up in last 2-3 years because they are waiting for the contract to expire
- We should have "all hands meetings" to be able to air out our concerns comfortably
- We have a new director of enforcement and I've never met him; need to go outside and meet staff; A leader comes and meets everyone and tells everyone what they are planning on doing
- Have more dialogue around this and on the value that employees bring to work
- I would go one step further; I used to have regular meetings with director but I had to skip my boss and the director said to slip it under his door with invisible ink

Consistent application of attendance policy

- Management no taking sides - follow the policy as opposed to doing things because they don't like it; be fair and consistent
- Doctors note in, but management does not care - penalty for being sick
- Give vacation when requested

- You're not sick but told to be on sick book anyway - e.g., pick up my child from school (it's like playing games)
- Everything is supposed to be by seniority but it is not that way
- I bank my holidays and I have requested it 3 times but have been rejected – if it is by seniority, that is not the case because I have been here over 20 years
- Seniority does not guarantee you take the banked holiday; Bank has the lowest seniority
- Inconsistent and unfair application of policies
- Disconnect around consistency and giving people the benefit of the doubt
- Inconsistent with regulations
- Make changes but not consistent (exit to rear door) - get rid of this message / Align all messages
- Ensure that our messages are appropriate
- Management behavior re: policy
- Leadership needs to be consistent; We need to all be on the same page and management needs to be consistent
- There is someone who does not show up twice a week and has been telecommuting for years (I do 1 day a week) but I got push back when I asked for it
- So this is also about ensuring equity in what is allowed for people
- Find a way to equitably distribute alternative work schedules or telecommuting from home or outside the office
- I understand that it is possible that administration could have policies different from operations policies
- Then we need to hold people accountable to this universally

Educate staff on attendance policy

- Clear-cut policy - we need to understand the policy and be consistent
- Get rid of patterned absences and 1 said she disagrees - Show patterns to drivers so they can see
- Educate staff on attendance policies
- Clarification & understanding on rules on absences
- Inability to take time off during probation for 1 year - very difficult, very stressful job
- Better understanding of leave policy
- Someone said it is NOT designed by seniority in the MOU and the MOU says that runs can be assigned to anyone at any time
- Doesn't fully know attendance policy & procedures
- Transit Operator does not have the MOU handbook
- Transit Operator just found out the MOU after 2 years
- Better practices for new hires to help them transition
- Confusion on the policy
- Need provisions for parents / families / Have to know what's available: When I started at Muni, my kids were young and I missed many events and was an absent father; We didn't have paternity

leave back in the day

- Better communication to operators about our guidelines
- Especially for senior operators who think the rules from back in the day
- Educate employees in the beginning when they first get here / We need a strong onboarding process
- Maybe operators need highlighted summaries of what has changed in union contracts, not just copies of full contracts
- I would START something so that operators that jobs are not guaranteed in life and it is not owed to you. This is a good place to be and we have an expectation that you come to work.
- We need to better educate our staff on available resources and what the programs are
- Sick time is not meant to be vacation. It is there for emergency. The whole idea of burning it before retirement is frustrating.
- I make them understand that this job is their right and here is how they can protect it
- When we do counseling, we remind them of what's available - FMLA, Claremont EAP, etc. (services for their issues) and administer the agency's policy
- We don't train managers that we have a policy and guidelines; managers come in blind and assume we don't have a policy; we have to put training together; we don't know when divisions know when managers come in
- Provide support for managers as they go through these processes and supervisors
- First we have younger generation who didn't work weekends before or not much and half don't know where they are going. They have to understand that this is the policy. We need to this early and often.
- I want to acknowledge how my staff can take the leave but I have to figure out how to deal with their leave

Incentivize and recognize good attendance

- Give stars/acknowledgement - Acknowledgment for not taking sick days; having an award or merit system for being here x days out of the year; different color jackets
- SAMTRANS - notes the operators of the month
- Reward good attendance
- Everyone should be appreciated / deals w/ abuses / need recognition / reflect in procedures & policies
- Before got paid $50 per pay period or 1 month for not calling in sick
- Pay me for NOT calling in sick - buy back to incentivize no sick leave usage
- Before SFMTA used to have sick buyback
- Then you accumulate so many hours and almost incentivizes people to take it
- People with backlogs of sick time are incentivized to take extended sick time and not when they are not sick
- Better incentives re: sick policy / Comp time; I left last job with 900+ hours of sick leave and I didn't get paid for it – same here

- Absences was taken out of an employee's performance plan/evaluation; I think we should encourage and recognize people who come to work every day; It is so easy for people to call in sick and people just trust that you are actually sick;
- There should be an incentive for people who are not absent the whole year
- Incentive program & reward program - The wellness program selling off sick buyback annual (used 5 days or less, could sell sick time) was good incentive (allow sell-off, not loose time)
- We need to figure out a way to incentivize people to come to work and reward those who come to work regularly
- I would like management to bring back incentive for SP accumulation & usage ; For 3 month period, if you worked 400 hours, you got $; Best incentive is $ (why we are here in the first place); Before we used to have plan that you were able to get 2/3 of SP time when you retire but they cut that time too à why build 1000 hours and lose it
- Sick pay sellback / cash out
- At another place I worked at, the better the attendance meant more opportunity for days off
- A bonus or payout at the end; some people are maxed out and giving incentive would help
- The incentive program before helped attendance

Union support and collaboration

- Not supported by union, especially when someone has sick hours and I don't (and it's a day off with no pay)
- Sometimes not enough support from union / low sometimes
- Transit Operator thinks MOU is busy trying to save some people's jobs instead of working on other issues
- In contract, 1 day vacation
- 7410 sign up has been delayed because there was a lawsuit on seniority - resolve litigation in timely manner; There were some that came from Central Shops and they were trying to gain the seniority at SFMTA; SFPD 7410s also came to SFMTA and wanted the same seniority
- Better relationship with the union - Old school mentality that the union is over here and management is over here - joint interest in staff
- Management goes by Civil Service system and union always says you are violating 12W; we need to design a way to build a collaborative relationship with the union
- Over 15 years, I have found it interesting that unions have never reconsidered changing the sick/vacation accruals; Big gap before you get that 3rd week of vacation; People run out of sick hours and take vacation; Not everyone has the ability to bank the time; Leave time is important
- Work with union to determine solution on time-off procedures
- On admin side, more flexibility in making assignments (i.e., union limitations on how we can move people around)
- Union always says "if you have time on the books, you have the right to call in sick." Union tells operators about filing grievances.

Mutual collaboration

- Management & employees need to work together

- Seems disconnect between divisions and downtown (1SVN)
- Collaborate between staff and management
- We need a more collaborative and respectful relationship w/ dispatcher, leadership
- Attendance policy - bridging transit operator's interests to both union and management
- We need labor relations on the same page - you can get different answers from different people in labor relations
- We need to migrate towards a collaborative work environment, instead of what we have, which is a hierarchical top-down environment if you want stellar results

Ensure staff is aware of health/wellness programs available and provide opportunities for them to participate

- If sick and working, hard to stay focused
- Workers comp vs. disability
- Health club to relieve stress
- Incentives / wellness program to relieve stress
- Health Improvement Program - efforts to help staff stay healthy: yoga classes here are good; biking to work; I haven't seen it yet but meditation would be good for stress management; even something online like a guided meditation
- Wellness center is there but is not flexible enough for employees to be able to use their facilities, needs to be more available; 6th floor there is a quiet room – there should be more spaces like that
- I do not know if the city should subsidize exercise during work time but having some sort of benefit like discounts at local gyms, etc.
- Meditation - stress management; even @ your desk; meditation room; quiet space
- Having a nice outdoor space would be good too like access to the roof or some outside space that is quiet and removed the noisiness of Market street
- Better space planning to facilitate health / We need better ergonomic stations to support our health
- Common ground between management and employees is wellness
- I think everyone has wellness as a concern and we want people to participate in a wellness program
- If SFMTA endorses wellness at the level that they should, this would communicate that they care about employees
- The biggest roadblock is that we have a great wellness program but SFMTA only allows employees to participate on their own time which limits participation
- Flexibility to allow participation in wellness activities; This would increase productivity

Incorporate adequate break/recovery time

- Stop taking time away from routes to allow for adequate restroom breaks & recovery time - holding bladder causes illnesses
- Eating while driving causes issues with weight & driving hazards
- 702 - bathroom usage - balancing needs / impacts public, so make sure facilities exists / sometimes no bathroom "outhouse" / 702 facilities NOT enough

- We are exposed to more illnesses out
- Certain lines I work I know I am going to go home sick
- Short layover time is difficult - union is trying to save money by cutting layover time but this affects service and efficiency / Traffic, constructions - puts stress on you
- Squeeze run, cut timing / Muni has lots of money
- Peak hours (7-9am) and (3pm to 7pm) - Buses are overloaded and people have to wait / SFMTA should have shuttle buses, plan in place to address issues
- Tourists end up on end of line and we are already late
- I think instead of allegedly getting paid for 20 minute lunch; federal law mandated lunch and breaks - we are getting paid for 20 minutes for lunch time that we don't get (regardless if I pay you for a half hour or 1 hour, it's about you being able to take your lunch break); NEED TO HAVE MY BREAK
- Rest, break, lunch, restroom breaks are needed - Don't have time to eat
- Need time to get better
- We need to ensure our operators get the breaks they need; better scheduling especially for rail; delays happen everyday
- Rails are different from buses - buses can go around but we cannot
- Schedules should be realistic - a lot of variables, e.g., bicyclists
- we are supposed to get a 15 minutes break but it is really only 8 minutes then we get 2 red lights so then it becomes 4 minutes (all these different scenarios can happen every day and they do not get considered in scheduling)
- Antiquated schedule and they don't consider the elements we deal with every day (external factors); traffic is different now

Increase management accountability and transparency

- Peer assistance - we don't believe it is confidential
- Buzz word on leadership committee is "accountability"
- Leadership accountability
- Management needs to step up / If management cannot identify the issue, it makes my job harder / If I do not want to deal with this issue, I'm going to call in sick
- We should ensure delegation of authority in all divisions to move forward; This is only for when managers are absent; not when coworkers are absent
- We started in our unit that if one person is out, an email goes out to the whole group so that we are all held accountable so if something does come up, someone else can take over; I have seen it sometimes but most of the time, I do not see it
- Prioritization then becomes management's decision of what is most critical
- We had an employee out for 3 months and I feel like the employee dropped the ball; The employee informed us all that she would be out for 3 months for surgery; No one was actually assigned to do her part of the work so the work kept piling up and all of a sudden, we had a fire to put out and all the information was left on her desk; As exec sec, I should have gone to my supervisor to ask her to assign someone to assist; Employee locked file cabinet

- When somebody is gone in our unit, my manager has a habit of going around to ask employees what is on their plate; The supervisor then determines who has more time to pick up the slack; I'd like to see the manager pick up the slack and not just assume that staff can do it; What is my manager doing? Where is he at?
- A lot of this is about management style but if someone will be out and doing critical work, I'd like to get an agreement/something in writing from manager that if this really has to be done, something else has to be stopped
- Needs to start from the top first; Under the auspice of Ed Reiskin, I spoke to all directors one on one and none have an understanding of the top list of SFMTA Leadership Commitments (respect, collaboration, and accountability)
- I want to see leadership by example - Upper management walking the wall – Demonstration of what you are asking me for
- Ensure commitments adhered to at ALL level of management; believe & practice commitments; we have the executive team who espouses the leadership commitments and we are in the middle. In that middle, we have two layers (a little higher and a little lower); Middle managers (the top level of middle); Lower level managers (Lieutenants) are happy to see this; Disconnect because it's broken
- We have seen higher level managers on executive team who have gotten promoted because they whip out really good numbers --< all about numbers; But absolute disrespect for staff; They talk a good a talk but they don't walk it
- We are in public service and it's about people - I am the boots on the ground when it is about people
- At every level above staff to Ed Reiskin, there needs to be consistency in belief and application of what is on the leadership commitments board

Clean workplace

- More clean environment (esp. driver's area)
- Implement way to keep buses clean (Shield-like to keep germs away, like the LRVs)
- Cleanliness issues
- Port-o-potties used need improvement
- Dignity of bathroom
- Trash bins are the worst
- Cleanliness is an issue; clean inside of cab
- I have to bring my own Lysol wipes before I sit down even if people being paid to do that
- Empty trash can

Cross-training of skills

- Cross-training of skills; we have to have things keep moving; we are half-staffed so if we do not ensure cross-training, things trickle down
- There needs to be rotation and cross-training and always a list of people can (sustainability)
- Seniority process keeps people stale on certain beats, other people not able to learn, vacation requests are impacted; rotation would help keep everything moving and fresh so people aren't tired on the same detail; now feel stuck

- Cross-training is really important for us so that we can
- I would rather have new hired operator be cross-trained. They are already motor coach qualified but I think we should cross-train them.
- What if we were able to come up with a list of events that happen every year? Then we work with the union to cross-train operators to be able to pull motor coaches so they can backfill. We are only doing that with extra boards.
- Cross-training is important.

Promote from bottom up w/ experience

- Promote from bottom up
- Inexperienced managers - haven't driven before
- Change management treatment of employees; fair treatment for promotion

Educate the public

- Educate the public - better educate riders on better utilize system
- Transit Operator used to be tour guide and he's heard from other tour bus companies that make recommendations to SFMTA; We could use signs that educate tourists on where to go and buses to take etc. / SFMTA doesn't listen to tour guides
- Public info/signs for lines with most tourist passengers
- Many tourists get on bus and they don't know that there are different 30 buses (30 and 30S for example)
- Meaningful and effective education for the public
- We need to better with information at stops shelters besides maps
- We can have announcements on bus (better than we have now), advertising section of bus
- Management information campaign to show value of drivers
- Back in the day, we used to have car cards or buses with operators' pictures and divisions

Focus on performance management

- We have a performance management problem here
- I think absence as problem goes hand in hand with performance management as a problem
- The way Civil Service system is set up, people are allowed to have both absence and performance problems
- If we don't manage performance, absences tend to mountain and become more problematic
- Address performance management - absence is performance issue

Improve workspace

- Workstations should be adapted a bit to be more flexible – maybe I want a standing desk just because I want to stand, not necessarily because I have lumbar issues
- In livable streets, the employees adjust their workstations themselves
- There is a policy about who can have closed office doors etc.
- Used to get migraines until she was able to move closer to the window and got a doctor's note

- Lower cube partitions for consultants
- We have so few window spaces; Would be nice if window spaces reserved for communal space to keep happy, productive staff & Give people exposure to light
- Ergo; space planning - space set up could affect absences; need space to facilitate better health & morale

Team-building activities to boost morale

- Examples: cleaning up a shared space, thinking of a new project
- Something that helps with the organization and is fun
- Fun yet productive; creative space to facilitate morale building
- I have mixed feelings about team building activities that have a facilitator
- Have unstructured team building - get to know each other better

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1: How long have you worked at SFMTA?[a,b]

	Less Than 1 year		1-3 years		4-6 years		7-10 years		11-15 years		Over 16 years		Total
ALL GROUPS	17	13%	22	17%	18	14%	18	14%	26	20%	31	23%	132
Administrative & Professional Staff[c]	4	27%	3	20%	0	0%	4	27%	4	27%	0	0%	15
Bus & Rail Maintenance[d]	1	8%	2	17%	1	8%	0	0%	2	17%	6	50%	12
Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[d]	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%	2	22%	6	67%	9
Parking Enforcement	1	6%	6	33%	0	0%	4	22%	3	17%	4	22%	18
Transit Operators – Flynn	2	22%	2	22%	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	3	33%	9
Transit Operators – Green	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	13%	6	75%	1	13%	8
Transit Operators – Kirkland	4	20%	2	10%	4	20%	2	10%	3	15%	5	25%	20
Transit Operators – Potrero	2	22%	2	22%	3	33%	0	0%	1	11%	1	11%	9
Transit Operators – Presidio	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	2	33%	1	17%	6
Transit Operators – Woods	2	20%	1	10%	4	40%	1	10%	2	20%	0	0%	10
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	0	0%	1	10%	3	30%	5	50%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Transit Superintendents	0	0%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	67%	6

Notes:
[a] Percentages for a group sometimes do not total to 100 percent due to rounding.
[b] Survey questions provided respondents with multiple-choice categories created by the audit team.
[c] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[d] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group.

Question 2: At which SFMTA division do you primarily work?[a]

	Communi-cations	Finance & Information Technology	Sustainable Streets	System Safety	Taxi & Accessible Services	Transit	Chief of Staff	Human Resources	Total
ALL GROUPS	**2**	**6**	**27**	**1**	**2**	**89**	**1**	**4**	**132**
Administrative & Professional Staff[b]	1	4	7	1	2	0	0	0	**15**
Bus & Rail Maintenance[c]	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	**12**
Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[c]	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	**9**
Parking Enforcement	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	**18**
Transit Operators – Flynn	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	**9**
Transit Operators – Green	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	**8**
Transit Operators – Kirkland	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	**20**
Transit Operators – Potrero	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	**9**
Transit Operators – Presidio	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	**6**
Transit Operators – Woods	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	**10**
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	4	**10**
Transit Superintendents	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	**6**

Notes:
[a] Survey questions provided respondents with multiple-choice categories created by the audit team.
[b] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[c] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group.

Question 3: During the last 12 months, I was absent from work_____.[a,b]

	Never (0-1 day)		Almost Never (2-5 days)		Sometimes (6-10 days)		Often (11-15 days)		Very Often (>15 days)		Did Not Answer		Total
ALL GROUPS	**22**	**17%**	**39**	**30%**	**49**	**37%**	**11**	**8%**	**9**	**7%**	**2**	**2%**	**132**
Administrative & Professional Staff[c]	1	7%	3	20%	8	53%	1	7%	2	13%	0	0%	**15**
Bus & Rail Maintenance[d]	3	25%	4	33%	4	33%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%	**12**
Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[d]	2	22%	1	11%	5	56%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%	**9**
Parking Enforcement	1	6%	9	50%	8	44%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**18**
Transit Operators – Flynn	2	22%	2	22%	1	11%	2	22%	2	22%	0	0%	**9**
Transit Operators – Green	0	0%	3	38%	4	50%	0	0%	1	13%	0	0%	**8**
Transit Operators – Kirkland	4	20%	7	35%	5	25%	2	10%	0	0%	2	10%	**20**
Transit Operators – Potrero	2	22%	2	22%	3	33%	1	11%	1	11%	0	0%	**9**
Transit Operators – Presidio	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	**6**
Transit Operators – Woods	5	50%	0	0%	4	40%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	**10**
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	0	0%	3	30%	4	40%	1	10%	2	20%	0	0%	**10**
Transit Superintendents	0	0%	3	50%	2	33%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%	**6**

Notes:
[a] Percentages for a group sometimes do not total to 100 percent due to rounding.
[b] Survey questions provided respondents with multiple-choice categories created by the audit team.
[c] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[d] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group.

Question 4: During the last 12 months, in general, staff in my division were absent from work on average_____.[a,b]

	Never (0-1 day)		Almost Never (2-5 days)		Sometimes (6-10 days)		Often (11-15 days)		Very Often (>15 days)		Did Not Answer		Total
ALL GROUPS	**1**	**1%**	**20**	**15%**	**41**	**31%**	**20**	**15%**	**15**	**11%**	**35**	**27%**	**132**
Administrative & Professional Staff[c]	0	0%	3	20%	8	53%	1	7%	3	20%	0	0%	**15**
Bus & Rail Maintenance[d]	0	0%	4	33%	6	50%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	**12**
Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[d]	0	0%	2	22%	3	33%	3	33%	0	0%	1	11%	**9**
Parking Enforcement	0	0%	3	17%	5	28%	4	22%	3	17%	3	17%	**18**
Transit Operators – Flynn	0	0%	0	0%	4	44%	2	22%	0	0%	3	33%	**9**
Transit Operators – Green	0	0%	0	0%	2	25%	1	13%	1	13%	4	50%	**8**
Transit Operators – Kirkland	0	0%	5	25%	4	20%	3	15%	1	5%	7	35%	**20**
Transit Operators – Potrero	1	11%	1	11%	0	0%	3	33%	2	22%	2	22%	**9**
Transit Operators – Presidio	0	0%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	4	67%	**6**
Transit Operators – Woods	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%	8	80%	**10**
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	0	0%	0	0%	8	80%	0	0%	1	10%	1	10%	**10**
Transit Superintendents	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	**6**

Notes:
[a] Percentages for a group sometimes do not total to 100 percent due to rounding.
[b] Survey questions provided respondents with multiple-choice categories created by the audit team.
[c] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[d] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group.

Question 5: I think absences in my division are excessive.[a,b]

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Did Not Answer		Total
ALL GROUPS	**10**	**8%**	**32**	**24%**	**44**	**33%**	**31**	**23%**	**12**	**9%**	**3**	**2%**	**132**
Administrative & Professional Staff[c]	1	7%	7	47%	5	33%	0	0%	1	7%	1	7%	15
Bus & Rail Maintenance[c]	1	8%	3	25%	4	33%	3	25%	1	8%	0	0%	12
Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[d]	2	22%	3	33%	2	22%	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Parking Enforcement	3	17%	2	11%	5	28%	6	33%	2	11%	0	0%	18
Transit Operators – Flynn	0	0%	4	44%	4	44%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Transit Operators – Green	0	0%	1	13%	3	38%	2	25%	0	0%	2	25%	8
Transit Operators – Kirkland	1	5%	2	10%	6	30%	8	40%	3	15%	0	0%	20
Transit Operators – Potrero	0	0%	2	22%	5	56%	1	11%	1	11%	0	0%	9
Transit Operators – Presidio	1	17%	2	33%	3	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Transit Operators – Woods	1	10%	2	20%	2	20%	3	30%	2	20%	0	0%	10
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	0	0%	3	30%	5	50%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Transit Superintendents	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%	3	50%	2	33%	0	0%	6

Notes:
[a] Percentages for a group sometimes do not total to 100 percent due to rounding.
[b] Survey questions provided respondents with multiple-choice categories created by the audit team.
[c] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[d] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group.

Question 6: When I am absent from work, my division's day-to-day operations are impacted.[a,b]

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Did Not Answer		Total
ALL GROUPS	**11**	**8%**	**29**	**22%**	**37**	**28%**	**42**	**32%**	**12**	**9%**	**1**	**1%**	**132**
Administrative & Professional Staff[c]	1	7%	3	20%	6	40%	3	20%	2	13%	0	0%	15
Bus & Rail Maintenance[d]	1	8%	3	25%	2	17%	3	25%	3	25%	0	0%	12
Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[d]	0	0%	1	11%	4	44%	4	44%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Parking Enforcement	2	11%	1	6%	7	39%	7	39%	1	6%	0	0%	18
Transit Operators – Flynn	0	0%	4	44%	2	22%	3	33%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Transit Operators – Green	1	13%	2	25%	1	13%	2	25%	1	13%	1	13%	8
Transit Operators – Kirkland	0	0%	4	20%	2	10%	11	55%	3	15%	0	0%	20
Transit Operators – Potrero	2	22%	3	33%	3	33%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Transit Operators – Presidio	1	17%	2	33%	3	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Transit Operators – Woods	1	10%	2	20%	3	30%	3	30%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	1	10%	2	20%	2	20%	5	50%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Transit Superintendents	1	17%	2	33%	2	33%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%	6

Notes:
[a] Percentages for a group sometimes do not total to 100 percent due to rounding.
[b] Survey questions provided respondents with multiple-choice categories created by the audit team.
[c] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[d] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group.

Question 7: When coworkers/staff are absent from work, my workload/division's day-to-day operations are impacted.[a,b]

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Did Not Answer		Total
ALL GROUPS	**7**	**5%**	**27**	**20%**	**31**	**23%**	**47**	**36%**	**16**	**12%**	**4**	**3%**	**132**
Administrative & Professional Staff[c]	0	0%	2	13%	5	33%	6	4 %	2	13%	0	0%	15
Bus & Rail Maintenance[d]	2	17%	4	33%	2	17%	1	8%	2	17%	1	8%	12
Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[d]	0	0%	3	33%	2	22%	4	44%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Parking Enforcement	1	6%	3	17%	5	28%	8	44%	1	6%	0	0%	18
Transit Operators – Flynn	0	0%	1	11%	3	33%	3	33%	2	22%	0	0%	9
Transit Operators – Green	1	13%	0	0%	2	25%	2	25%	1	13%	2	25%	8
Transit Operators – Kirkland	0	0%	3	15%	3	15%	1	5 %	3	15%	1	5%	20
Transit Operators – Potrero	1	11%	3	33%	2	22%	3	33%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Transit Operators – Presidio	1	17%	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Transit Operators – Woods	0	0%	4	4 %	2	2 %	4	4 %	0	0%	0	0%	10
Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	1	1 %	1	1 %	3	3 %	4	4 %	1	1 %	0	0%	10
Transit Superintendents	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	4	67%	0	0%	6

Notes:
[a] Percentages for a group sometimes do not total to 100 percent due to rounding
[b] Survey questions provided respondents with multiple-choice categories created by the audit team.
[c] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[d] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group.

Question 8a: Identify the reasons why you were absent in the last 12 months.

REASON FOR ABSENCE[a]	Administrative & Professional Staff[b]	Bus & Rail Maintenance[c]	Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[c]	Parking Enforcement	Transit Operators Flynn	Transit Operators Green	Transit Operators Kirkland	Transit Operators Potrero	Transit Operators Presidio	Transit Operators Woods	Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	Transit Superintendents	Total
Work-related injury	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Non work-related injuries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	11
Minor illness (e.g., cold, flu, headaches, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Stress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Depression	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	11
Burnout	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Bullying/Harassment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	10
Planned absences (e.g., Pre-approved vacation, parental leave)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Medical appointment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Major or chronic illness or condition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Personal commitments (e.g., caring for family or loved ones)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Job hunting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	10
Partial shifts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	9
Low morale	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Lack of commitment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	10
Lack of motivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	11
Other	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓	7

Notes:
[a] Survey questions provided respondents with categories created by the audit team.
[b] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[c] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group.

Question 8b: Identify the reasons why your coworkers were absent in the last 12 months.[a]

REASON FOR ABSENCE[b]	Administrative & Professional Staff[c]	Bus & Rail Maintenance[d]	Transit Operators & Staff – Cable Car[d]	Parking Enforcement	Transit Operators Flynn	Transit Operators Green	Transit Operators Kirkland	Transit Operators Potrero	Transit Operators Presidio	Transit Operators Woods	Total
Work-related injury	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	9
Non work-related injuries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			8
Minor illness (e.g., cold, flu, headaches, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Stress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Depression	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Burnout	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Bullying/Harassment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Planned absences (e.g., Pre-approved vacation, parental leave)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			7
Medical appointment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	8
Major or chronic illness or condition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	9
Personal commitments (e.g., caring for family or loved ones)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	8
Job hunting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			7
Partial shifts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	8
Low morale	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Lack of commitment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	8
Lack of motivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	8
Other	✓										1

Notes:
[a] The results presented on this page are for staff-level classifications only.
[b] Survey questions provided respondents with categories created by the audit team.
[c] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.
[d] Bus & Rail Maintenance includes cable car maintenance staff. Cable car transit operators and transit staff are combined into one group

Question 8b: Identify the reasons why your staff was absent in the last 12 months.[a]

REASON FOR ABSENCE[b]	Administrative & Professional Mid-level Managers	Transit Superintendents
Work-related injury	✓	✓
Non work-related injuries	✓	✓
Minor illness (e.g., cold, flu, headaches, etc.)	✓	✓
Stress	✓	✓
Depression	✓	✓
Burnout	✓	✓
Bullying/Harassment	✓	✓
Planned absences (e.g., Pre-approved vacation, parental leave)	✓	✓
Medical appointment	✓	✓
Major or chronic illness or condition	✓	✓
Personal commitments (e.g., caring for family or loved ones)	✓	✓
Job hunting	✓	✓
Partial shifts	✓	✓
Low morale	✓	✓
Lack of commitment	✓	✓
Lack of motivation	✓	✓
Other		✓

Notes:
[a] Survey questions provided respondents with categories created by the audit team.
[b] There were two focus groups sessions for administrative and professional staff. This reflects the combined results.

APPENDIX D: DEPARTMENT RESPONSE

SFMTA
Municipal
Transportation
Agency

December 14, 2016

Tonia Lediju, Director of City Audits
Office of the Controller, City Services Auditor Division
City Hall, Room 476
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Subject: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Absence Management Audit

Dear Ms. Lediju:

I would like to thank you and your staff for your work during the Absence Management audit of the SFMTA. Please find attached our responses to the audit recommendations.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Donald Ellison, SFMTA's Director of Human Resources and Payroll, at (415) 701-5079.

Sincerely,

Edward D. Reiskin
Director of Transportation

Enclosure

For each recommendation, the responsible agency should indicate whether it concurs, does not concur, or partially concurs. If it concurs with the recommendation, it should indicate the expected implementation date and implementation plan. If the responsible agency does not concur or partially concurs, it should provide an explanation and an alternate plan of action to address the identified issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

Recommendation	Response
The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency should:	
1. Establish a managerial training policy that is consistent with developing a core competency in compassionate leadership skills. This will provide tools to foster a respectful, collaborative, and accountable organizational culture. At a minimum: a. Collaborate with the Department of Human Resources to develop and implement a sustainable and consistent leadership development program that will enhance leadership's soft skills and emotional intelligence, including implementing continuous leadership trainings on: i. Engaging, empowering, supporting and motivating staff. ii. Authentic, open and respectful communication and interactions. iii. Increasing trust through team-building. iv. Coaching and giving feedback. v. Conflict resolution and management. vi. Interpersonal skills. vii. Setting performance goals and expectations. viii. Creating a safe work environment. ix. Managing employee work/life balance. b. Cross-train staff to improve workload coordination and ensure knowledge transfer. c. Continuously train and inform employees about the agency's leave and attendance policies, procedures and guidelines.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and partially implemented. The Agency has established an Organizational Development (OD) and Learning Team. This team is establishing a training policy that will provide tools to foster a respectful, collaborative and accountable culture. The OD manager's appointment was effective November 21, 2016. The Learning Team trainers' appointment was effective November 28, 2016. The Agency has staff in place who continuously train and inform employees about the agency's leave and attendance policies, procedures and guidelines. The transit division has a dedicated Leave and Attendance Management employee in place.

Recommendation	Response
2. Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that considers multiple avenues to connect with employees, including in-person and online, and that allows for two-way communication.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and partially implemented. The Culture Change Initiative: Creating an Outstanding Workplace has developed twenty three Outstanding Workplace Initiatives. This initiative, along with elements of the Agency's Strategic Plan will contribute to the development of a comprehensive communication strategy. The steering committee conducts monthly meetings and has proposed hiring a dedicated staff to complete the recommendation. By coordinating the message and process communications initiatives, this part of the comprehensive communications strategy has established roles for Communications, IT and the Performance Team to complete action items. Best practices for communication protocols have been outlined to ensure awareness of how to access information. Customer relationship management (CRM) refers to practices, strategies and technologies used to manage and analyze customer interactions and data throughout the customer lifecycle. CRM systems are designed to compile information on customers across different channels -- or points of contact between the customer and the Agency-- which could include all channels of interaction, including social media. CRM systems can also give customer-facing staff detailed information on customers' preferences and concerns. A customer relationship Change Management process is intended to incorporate use of an agency-wide CRM into work protocols. The establishment of best practices internal resource for communications protocols and resources that outline use of tone, graphics, policies and procedures to be used: Second Quarter, 2017 Operate digital signs/content system at 1 South Van Ness and eight divisions with system scalability for 30 locations to provide daily

Recommendation	Response
	communication to frontline employees: Second Quarter, 2017 Ensure staff and city departments are aware of protocols and how to access content information: Third Quarter, 2017 Develop a CRM Change Management strategy to incorporate use of an agency city-wide CRM into work protocols: First Quarter, 2018 As a part of rebooting the SFMTA Intranet, several initiatives are underway. Migrating old inside SFMTA division, section and business unit portal sites to a new Communications branded portal sites: First Quarter 2017 Development of a knowledge center/data sharing cross divisional exchange of information via the intranet: First Quarter 2017 Adding e-mail accounts for all transit operators and the incorporation of DocuSign: First Quarter 2017 Inside MUNI, Director Reiskin's blog, the Operator Portal and Agency video information displays are a part of the comprehensive communication strategy that considers multiple avenues to connect with employees and fosters two-way communication.
3. Seek external expertise or hire an employee dedicated to assessing, enhancing, and further implementing the agency's workforce engagement strategy to improve professional respect, communication, and accountability throughout the organization. To do so: a. Revise the agency's employee satisfaction survey to collect data in new areas, such as work-life balance. b. Develop a strategy to increase response rates to the employee satisfaction survey, especially among transit operators. c. Regularly track and analyze data on absences, engagement, job satisfaction, and workforce demographics to identify and report on patterns and make data-driven decisions.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and partially implemented. The Agency has established an Organizational Development (OD) and Learning Team. The OD manager's appointment was effective November 21, 2016. The Learning Team trainers' appointment was effective November 28, 2016. The OD and Learning Team along with the Culture Change and Outstanding Workplace steering committee will assess and enhance the implementation of the Agency's Workplace engagement strategy as defined in the Agency's Strategic Plan.

Recommendation	Response
d. Strengthen and formalize the employee recognition and reward program throughout the department to acknowledge and recognize employee achievements and accomplishments. e. Report to the Board of Directors annually on the results of employee engagement efforts	In response to audit findings, the Agency updated its annual employee engagement survey questionnaire to include data in new area, including work-life balance, safety culture, training and support and classification specific responses. In response to audit findings, the Agency refined its survey deployment methods to include direct mail in an effort to improve response rates among field, operations and maintenance staff. The most recent survey outreach successfully resulted in an increase in response rates among these staff, particularly Transit Operators (9163). First Quarter, 2017: The Agency will embark on a second phase of developing absence tracking management tools beyond the pilot phase that will be deployed agency-wide upon the completion of the PeopleSoft payroll software upgrade. The tools will enable regular tracking of employee absence trends, sick leave abuse and a correlation with employee engagement metrics. The Agency has a strong tradition of formalized recognition and reward programs. Along with longevity, the Agency places a high value on rewarding safe work practices and innovative practices. The Agency Director reviews employee achievements and outstanding employee accomplishments during his monthly Senior Management Team meeting and at monthly SFMTA Board meetings.
4. Ensure that the agency provides a work environment that promotes employee health, work-life balance, and productivity.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. Existing Agency programs ensure that the Agency provides a work environment that promotes employee health, work-life balance and productivity. The Agency Wellness Unit works in conjunction with the Agency

Recommendation	Response
	Wellness Council to promote employee health, work-life balance and productivity. Consolidated and coordinated programs address physical, nutritional, financial and mental/emotional needs of Agency employees. http://inside.sfmta.com:8088/wellness/SitePages/default.aspx
5. During upcoming labor negotiations or through existing joint labor-management committees, consider options to create a meaningful way for employees to be involved in making decisions that affect their work environment.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. The Agency's Joint Labor Management Committees address on-going efforts to maintain a harmonious relationship between the Agency and Bargaining Units.
6. Establish departmental absence management policy.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur. Established and pending implementation after City Attorney's Office (CAO) review. A departmental absence management policy has been developed for miscellaneous and safety-sensitive employees and is under review by CAO.
7. Create procedures in each division of the agency to ensure that the departmental absence management policy is achieved.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. Procedures, Guidelines and instructions are available on the Agency website along with documentation resources.
8. Train managers and supervisors on the importance of the absence management policy and procedures and ensure that they understand the processes involved in absence management.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. The Agency has staff in place who continuously train and inform employees about the agency's leave and attendance policies, procedures and guidelines.

Recommendation	Response
9. Clearly communicate the absence management policy and procedures to all staff.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. Bulletins, memos to staff and the Agency's intranet make use of multiple communication platforms to provide agency-wide policy and procedure information.
10. Create a centralized process for managing and monitoring all long-term leaves. The process should use dedicated staff to ensure uniformity and consistency and establish clear lines of communication across the department.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. The Agency has established an internal tracking system to ensure that leaves are approved and tracked.
11. Ensure that the systems used for personnel, leave, and payroll data are interfaced and contain relevant data to provide timely information for agency-wide absence management.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. The Agency uses a citywide interfaced PeopleSoft system.
12. Develop procedures that explicitly require units involved in the return to work process be notified when an employee is ready to begin a step for which that unit is responsible. For instance, the electronic tracking system in development should notify VTT/Training automatically when an employee completes the License and Medical step.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. Procedures already exist for business units involved in an employee's return to work process to notify each other of the employee's return status. The Electronic Return to Work system (currently being implemented) adopts existing procedures into its' business logic and sends emails to relevant business units regarding the employee's return status (i.e., completion or incompletion of steps in the Return process).
13. Require supervisors to sign and submit Return to Work processing forms to the Return to Work unit within a specified number of days.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. It has always been Agency Human Resources (HR) procedure to

Recommendation	Response
	require supervisors to sign and submit Return to Work (RTW) processing forms to the HR RTW unit as soon as the employee returns to work.
14. Require the Return to Work unit to enter the information on Return to Work processing forms into the Human Resources Database System within a specified number of days.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. It is the current Agency HR Return to Work Unit procedure to close the Leave in HR Database systems (HRDB and PeopleSoft) as soon as HR receives notification of the return.
15. Require that all units that approve Return to Work processing forms to sign the form on or after the date of completion.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. It is the current Agency HR procedure to require that all relevant business units approve an employee's return process based upon the requirement(s) of that unit.
16. Use the new electronic routing system, upon its full implementation, to monitor employees' progress and to pro-actively engage employees to try to return them to work quickly.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and partially implemented. The Electronic Return to Work system (eRTWP) was rolled out agency wide. It is utilized for all employees engaged in the Return process. HR and Information Technology (IT) representatives have trained all Managers and Supervisors of Transit Operators and Maintenance employees in the use of the eRTWP (over 60% of MTA's workforce). An agency-wide memo will be sent January 2017 instructing all managers and supervisors of the eRTWP requirements and a link to instructional videos of how to use the system.
17. Track leave granted under the Family and Medical Leave Act using FMLA functionality in the City's PeopleSoft payroll system.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and partially implemented.

Recommendation	Response
	MTA HR has been tracking FMLA Leaves in PeopleSoft 9.2 since September 2016. MTA is on target to utilize PeopleSoft 9.2 to track Leaves afforded under FMLA, CFRA, PPL, PDL, and FCL by December 2016 for all MTA miscellaneous employees. Trapeze is the transportation scheduling software used by the Agency. MTA HR plans on including tracking the long-term Leaves of Transit Operators as soon as MTA's Trapeze software is upgraded to Version 16 and can send/receive data with PeopleSoft 9.2. Proposed implementation: Second Quarter 2017
18. Work with the Office of the Controller's eMerge Division to identify functional and reporting requirements for the PeopleSoft 9.2 upgrade so that the Family and Medical Leave Act leave tracking and reporting functions meet the agency's needs.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and partially implemented. MTA HR along with other City and County of San Francisco departments have been working with eMerge since July 2016 to identify functional and reporting requirements of the tracking FMLA and other job protected Leaves for the agency. Proposed completion: First Quarter 2017
19. Work with the Office of the Controller's eMerge Division to implement the PeopleSoft Absence Management module to help the agency better manage employees' short- and long-term absences.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur MTA HR along with other City and County of San Francisco departments have been working with eMerge since July 2016 to better manage employee long-term absences. In partnership with the Controller and DHR, the Agency is implementing the PeopleSoft Absence Management Module. PeopleSoft leave tracking implemented for miscellaneous employees September, 2016. Non-miscellaneous employees under development; proposed completion: First Quarter 2017.

Recommendation	Response
20. Ensure that the leave management and tracking information maintained in the Human Resource Database System is transferred into the PeopleSoft system to keep an accurate historical record of employee leaves in one location.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur MTA HR has worked with eMerge to upload HRDB Leave data to PeopleSoft 9.2 in July 2016 as part of a pilot group of MTA employees. MTA exported from HRDB employees in job code 8214 and worked with eMerge to upload that Leave data to 9.2 successfully. In partnership with the Controller and DHR, the Agency is implementing the PeopleSoft Absence Management Module. PeopleSoft leave tracking implemented for miscellaneous employees September, 2016. The business logic used for this HRDB data export will be used to export data for all miscellaneous employees that fall under the Leave protections provided in PeopleSoft 9.2 (Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA),California Family Rights Act (CFRA), Paid Parental Leave (PPL),Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL) and Family Care Leave (FCL): expected completion date: First Quarter 2017. Non-miscellaneous employees under development; proposed completion February, 2017.
21. Ensure that only eligible employees who have been approved for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act be allowed to take sick leave or vacation covered by FMLA.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur MTA HR currently has procedures in place to ensure that only eligible employees who have been approved for FMLA be allowed to take sick leave or vacation covered by FMLA. Trapeze is the transportation scheduling software used by the Agency. MTA HR currently has procedures in place by instructing transit managers/supervisors to utilize Trapeze to check work time and absence time to ensure FMLA eligibility.

Recommendation	Response
22. Comply with Family and Medical Leave Act eligibility requirements. These include ensuring that employees have: a. Been employed for at least 12 months. b. Worked 1,250 hours or more during the 12 months of service. c. Not had a break in service of seven years or more.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur; implementation in process. PeopleSoft 9.2 implementation anticipated for the first quarter of 2017 (for all Miscellaneous employees) will ensure MTA compliance with FMLA requirements. Trapeze is the transportation scheduling software used by the Agency. As Trapeze is upgraded to Version 16 and has the ability to feed data to/from PeopleSoft, all MTA employees will be tracked in compliance with FMLA requirements.
23. Ensure that supervisors understand their roles in approving and monitoring an employee's leave and effectively communicate with units of the Human Resources Division regarding employee leave status.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur; implementation in process. FMLA compliance for miscellaneous employees is complete December, 2016 utilizing PeopleSoft 9.2. Trapeze is the transportation scheduling software used by the Agency. Once Trapeze is upgraded to Version 16 and is able to feed deed to/from PeopleSoft, all MTA employees will be tracked in compliance with FMLA requirements.
24. Document its Human Resources Return to Work processes and ensure that they are followed consistently. Written procedures should include those that state that: a. Designated personnel analysts in the Return to Work Unit are authorized to sign the Human Resources approval section of leave request forms. b. Leave information, including form receipt dates and leave duration dates, is to be indicated on all documentation and in the Human Resource Database Management System. c. Leave forms should be dated, signed and properly retained.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and partially implemented. MTA HR will update existing Return Work procedures binder to include: 1) Which HR staff are designated to approve Requests for Leave 2) Guidelines for Request for Leave form completion and requiring proper documentation of form receipt dates and leave duration dates, and 3) Guidelines for Leave form required information such as dates, signatures, and instructions for staff to properly distribute the Leave forms to relevant business units, the employee file, or scanned document repositories.

Recommendation	Response
	Completion: First Quarter, 2017
25. Enter employee leave information in the Human Resource Database Management System accurately and in a timely manner and update the information, such as leave start and end dates, in a timely manner.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and implemented. MTA HR will continue to enter employee leave information into the HR Database System accurately and timely as the documents are received from employees and the divisions. MTA HR will continue to communicate to Agency leadership the necessity to receive employee Requests for Leaves prior to the employee going on leave and in order to maintain Department of Labor (DOL) compliance standards. MTA HR has a quarterly audit system in place to ensure accuracy and timeliness of entry.
26. Use data-driven staffing analyses to inform its decisions for budgeting positions throughout the agency.	☑ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur Concur and partially implemented. The Agency currently uses data-driven staffing analyses to inform its decisions for budgeted positions for the majority of divisions. Transit services is endeavoring to develop a method to calculate the total number of transit operations needed for full-time delivery levels including adjustments for seasonal absenteeism and extra-board. With this information, HR will then apply leave data (FMLA-long term and intermittent), ADA accommodations and attrition numbers including retirement. The staffing analysis would then be subject to finance audit to determine the fiscal budgetary capacity. Transit Services projected implementation: Fourth Quarter, 2017

Recommendation	Response
27. Determine whether the benefits of incorporating the impact of hiring, training, transfers, and shortages at the Transit Division units for cable car, street car, and light rail into transit operator staffing calculations would exceed the ongoing costs to perform the calculations.	☐ Concur ☑ Do Not Concur ☐ Partially Concur The purpose of the recommendation.is unclear. Greater analysis related to the cost of hiring across all modes of services provided by the Agency would be beneficial; however, the existing requirements for the SFMTA as a multi-modal agency to hire new operators as bus operators first does not allow flexibility in managing staffing issues specifically to rail operations.